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To Mrs Sullivan

with the respectful regards

J. G. W. Irving

THE

ALPHABET

OF THE

PRIMITIVE LANGUAGE OF SPAIN,

AND A

PHILOSOPHICAL EXAMINATION OF THE ANTIQUITY AND

CIVILIZATION OF THE BASQUE PEOPLE:

AN EXTRACT FROM THE

WORKS OF DON JUAN BAUTISTA DE ERRO.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

A PERSONAL acquaintance with Mr Erro during my late residence in Spain, (from 1816 to 1819) and admiration of his extraordinary genius, first induced me to examine with attention those of his literary labors from which the following pages are an "extract;" the impressions in favor of his opinions as to the antiqueness of the basque language which I at that time received, were very much confirmed, when afterwards (in 1821) I found him in Paris applying his system with success, to the explanation of the legends on various Etruscan monuments existing in the French national library; these having baffled all the ingenuity of the antiquaries and philologists, had long since been abandoned as wholly inexplicable: from this highly interesting occupation Mr Erro was called away by the political revolution in his country; having returned to Spain and entered into the councils of his king, he has left incomplete a work, which had it been pursued by his powerful and philosophic intellect, and with his indefatigable industry and research, could not but have produced the most satisfactory results, and have established his own reputation amongst the most illustrious in the republic of letters. From the period here referred to, Mr Erro having continued to be an influential member of the Spanish administration, his political character has become "*European*," and has partaken of the universal abhorrence excited by that course of vindictive persecution which has followed the "*restoration*;" though this fact cannot diminish his authority as a man of erudition, yet possibly in certain points of

view, it may tend to predispose some of his American readers to receive his philosophical opinions with disfavor or distrust ; it may not therefore be deemed improper for me in this place to offer his apology founded on an intimate personal acquaintance. Mr Erro is a philanthropist in the most comprehensive sense of that term, and his temper is singularly liberal, mild, and conciliatory ; in whatever degree he may have manifested condescension to the royal power, it is certain that he has not had any direct agency in its excesses ; indeed his department has been almost if not altogether, exclusively that of finance ; nor in strict justice ought the reactions referred to be attributed to any portion of the king's ministry, or to his cabinet collectively, or even to Ferdinand's own temper and policy ; they are, in a greater or lesser degree, the indefectible results of all "*restorations*." If then Mr Erro, amongst others the most distinguished of his fellow-subjects, has lent his aid to the restoration of the royal authority in Spain, we must presume that he has acted on a more intimate knowledge of his country, the character of its inhabitants, and of their incapacity to receive and maintain republican institutions, than we can pretend to ; and if his judgment on this point has been proved to have been correct, then certainly he will be excused, if tempted by personal considerations, he has not rejected the honors which have been offered to him ; he is not the first who has sacrificed the pursuits of philosophy to those of ambition, nor will he be the last probably. It may well happen also, that exceptions will be taken to some portions, or to some of the forms of my author's argument where it *necessarily* rests on, or is connected with, the Mosaic history ; the matter might certainly have been treated independent of that authority, and probably with at least equal effect ; but Mr Erro is a *catholic* ; that fact apart, he is not a solitary example of a philosopher modifying his principles, and accommodating his system, whether from fear or benevolence, so as to avoid offence to received doctrines, or shocking prevailing prejudices : independent of all such considerations,

it is evident that in countries where priests rule, all philosophical and metaphysical discussion must have an *orthodox* basis to entitle it to a passport from the church, without this it cannot proceed: Mr Erro wrote in a country where there was an inquisition, with an imprimatur, a double headed monster, who keeps incessant watch at the portal of the intellectual elysium.

I have thought that some account of the system of this learned philologist, might be acceptable in the United States, where certainly the philosophy of language is cultivated by men of as high qualification in that most important department of science, as are any to be found in Europe:—to these then I present the following *extracts* from the principal works of Mr Erro,—viz: “*Alfabeto de la lengua primitiva*,” and “*El mundo primitivo*,” a work not yet completed. I abridge also very considerably of the argument in some of the portions extracted, for reasons which it is proper here to explain.—As my author had to support doctrines entirely new, against general and deep-rooted prejudices, and all classical authority, and to meet an opposition neither feeble nor liberal from several cotemporary writers of no mean capacity,* he was obliged to labor his subject,—to

* As a specimen of this polemic illiberality, I may particularize an opinion given by Mr Lecluse, undoubtedly a very learned man, since he is professor of Hebrew and Greek literature at Toulouse in France:—this gentleman who has constructed a grammar of the basque language, attempts by a few flippant phrases to set aside all the pretensions of Larramendi, Astarloa, Erro, and other learned Basques,—and not only denies that their language has an alphabet now, but doubts whether it *ever had* an alphabet; these are his words, “*le fait est que cette langue n’a point d’alphabet, du moins que lui soit propre. Il est possible qu’elle en ait eu, cela meme est tres croyable, si il est vrai que la basque ait été la langue universelle de l’antique Iberie*,” it does not appear how the probability that the basque language had an alphabet formerly, is affected by the question whether or not it was the idiom used throughout the peninsula at any given epoch; and on the supposition that it had an alphabet *because* it was the “*universal language of Iberia*,” Mr Lecluse should have offered to us at least a conjecture, as to how its alphabet could have been lost, since the very fact that the language was *universal*, the only ground on which he will admit the supposition that it had an alphabet, augments the probability that the same alphabet would have been preserved. It is indeed most extraordinary that Mr Lecluse, even whilst speaking of Mr Erro’s “*alfabeto de la lengua primitiva*” should venture to make problematical a fact which is so indisputably proved by that very work; *materially* proved by fac-similies of fifty coins, all with basque inscriptions

insist on a variety of subsidiary matter with an exuberance of reasoning, which were fatiguing to readers in general,—which is not essential to my limited purpose,—and which I have the less repugnance in curtailing, since all opposition to him has ceased.—Proposing then to give merely a general view, or an outline of his system, with as much only of his reasoning and proof as is indispensable to the full understanding of it, I have omitted of the first work all that relates to the ancient religion of Spain,—to the invention of coining, and other matters curious and interesting, but not essential to my purpose ;—as also the application of the alphabet to the explanation of the inscriptions on coins and other monuments of high antiquity found in the basque provinces ; I could not have made any useful selection from that part of the work, which would not have required basque types. In extracting from the second work I have taken still greater liberty with the author, for as the reader will observe, his principal thesis so bold and entirely original, yet free from all dogmatism, must needs have required for its support a variety and profusion of discussion which admits of much abridgment ; I have curtailed also the elucidations of it in its application to ancient geography and the origin of legislation, and thus concluded my extract with the explanation of the numeral system, abridging however very considerably the author's developments of the Pythagorean philosophy derived from that system, by omitting the greater part of those absurdities and metaphysical illusions disgusting to readers in general, and which at this day are held in no great respect even by metaphysicians ; yet I have inserted as much of this as appeared essential to the proof, that the power attributed to numbers by Pythagoras, and after him by Plato, had its origin in an imperfect tradition of the primitive philosophy. Though I must allow that the fatigue of

in basque letters, besides the vase of Castulo, the famous stone of Saguntum, the earthen jar of Trigueros, the stone of Clunia, and other similar monuments, all having basque legends ; hence we are forced to conclude that Mr Lecluse never saw Erro's book, one half at least of which is occupied by the most complete and satisfactory explanation of those legends.

translating abstruse metaphysical conceptions, (after having succeeded in penetrating their obscurity) so as to give to them the best form of which they are susceptible in another language, has in some passages rather encouraged this disposition to abridge, yet I think that I might have carried it further without prejudice to the main argument of the author. I will not boast (as is the common practice) of the "fidelity," or "special care" which has been employed in this translation; of its accuracy those who have an opportunity of consulting the original works will judge for themselves; but it is incumbent on me to assure the general reader, that though I have translated freely and hastily, I have not perverted the sense of the author; I trust indeed, that by lopping off some redundancies of the argument, I may have made it more acceptable: withal I am aware that there may be still found in Mr Erro's reasoning, positions not perfectly clear and satisfactory under a severe examination; yet after rejecting all that the most fastidious criticism can take exception to, there will yet remain I trust, more especially in his analysis of the letters, sufficient of solid incontrovertible proof of the principal fact to be established by the "Alfabeto," viz: that the Greek alphabet has been taken from the Euscaran, and not from the Phœnecian, as has hitherto been generally believed on the authority of the ancient writers:* the precise

* Ancient *history*, so called, is full of confusions, where it is not fabulous; how little reliance then can be placed on its authority groping in the darkness of the primitive ages. Herodotus, called the "father of history," is the first authority for this story of Cadmus, but he speaks of an epoch a thousand years before his own time, when the Greeks were in a state of barbarism. Lecluse the French author before mentioned, after telling us that the Phœnecian language was a dialect of the Hebrew, and showing that the Greek alphabet is no other than the Hebrew, falls into the common tract of authority as to the story of Cadmus, though as he at the same time explains "Cadim" in Hebrew to signify *the East*, and "Cadmoni" oriental, he leads to a very natural presumption that the expedition of Cadmus was but an allegory. The reader will observe that Mr Erro has not availed himself of these etymologies, as in a certain view he might have done with advantage to his argument; he has reasoned on the less favorable supposition, that the Phœnecian prince did exist; possibly from submission to that sort of conventional authority belonging to the Grecian and Roman authors, which men of a "classical education" are the last to question: herein is a principal disadvantage of a *classical education*, the blind veneration which it produces for all the absurdities of antiquity; wholly authoritative, it dispenses with the

period in which the Euscaran alphabet was formed is not equally evident; its anteriority to the Phœnecian or Hebrew does not, nor does even its philosophical construction, wholly settle this point; yet as we are without any history or tradition which can enable us to approach by reasonable conjecture the period of its invention, Mr Erro's reasoning with a view to this object is admissible in its full extent. It is only by deciphering the legends and hieroglyphics on ancient monuments, that we can attain the least acquaintance with events anterior to history; the author's method is no other than this; by his examination of the coins, vases, &c. found in the basque provinces, it is proved beyond the possibility of doubt, that the first settlers of that country had an alphabet; its high antiquity is proved by an analysis of its letters; its origin, or in other words the invention of the art of writing, is most reasonably inferred to have preceded by many ages the first settlement of Spain; was it coeval with the formation of the language? this question is comprised in the argument on the antiqueness of that language: the purpose of Mr Erro's second work (*El Mundo primitivo*) is to prove the Euscaran to have been antideluvian; if that language existed at the time of the dispersion it was doubtless the language of Noah; then still following as authority the Mosaic narration, it must have been the language of Adam; and then its philosophical perfection abundantly suffices to prove that it was infused, or given to the first man simultaneously with his being. Whatever may be thought of this argument, it must be allowed that the author's method is highly ingenious, and his reasoning very forcible.

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 use of the reasoning faculty in matters of history, thus disqualifying its disciples for the discovery of truths, and too frequently rendering them inimical to the discoveries of others; this same classic devotion is one cause of the secondary or insufficient attention given to the mathematics, which ought to be the corner stone, the very basis of all education. Amongst the many errors in history corrected by etymology, is that which from a similarity in the sound of names makes the Iberians to be descendants from the Hebrews, into which nation Mr Lecluse (as professor of Hebrew doubtless) seems disposed to dissolve all others; the two *names* had a common origin probably, but that only because the nations who first had fixed residences call all the others, still migratory, "Iberi," wanderers; such were the Jews before their entry into Europe, such probably the Euscaldunes before their entry into Spain.

ble ; his analysis of the basque numeration, on a mistaken conception of which it is made perfectly evident that the Pythagorean philosophy was founded, gives to his system a basis of such solidity, as must command the respect even of scepticism. This system admitted, surely no philosophic speculation can excite so high an interest, for (in the author's words) "*it opens a communication, and forms a link of connexion with the primeval ages ;*" it supplies the only means of any acquaintance with the state of civilization in the commencement of human society ; for though it be allowed that the Mosaic Genesis is authority because it was inspired, and in this view it is necessarily considered by Mr Erro, yet this contains but a succinct account of the creation, and a rapid sketch of the growth of society, (all comprised within six chapters) but teaches nothing as to its intellectual progress or acquirements previous to the deluge.

* The deluge is a *fact*, not depending on history, inspired or uninspired, and not because found in the traditions of all nations, but the material physical proofs of which are visible in its relics dispersed over the whole globe :—we know also without the aid of history or tradition, and notwithstanding whatever may have been taught to the contrary, what must have been the moral results of that catastrophe ; that it must have laid waste all the works of man, all that had been accumulated by his genius, as by his labor, reducing him to the state of a miserable wanderer on the face of a devastated earth scarcely supplying him with the means of continuing his wretched existence ; wholly occupied with his physical sufferings and wants, his intellectual condition was but little superior to that of the brute creation ; from that state of degradation he could not have emerged but by very slow degrees through a long course of ages ; nay, when we observe the different degrees of civilization now existing

* There may have been many *universal* deluges, according to the opinion of Cuvier and other geologists' reasoning on fossil remains ;—I refer in this place only to those ruins which we find on the *surface* of the earth, or in its upper strata. These, it is evident, are of the last deluge ; the only one in which our species was concerned, as they suppose.

amongst the different societies which inhabit the earth, perhaps it were not unreasonable to conclude, that herein also the effects of the deluge are still apparent;—how otherwise account for such wide distinctions in the condition of man who by the constitution of nature is everywhere physically and morally the same being.*

By the deluge then, and by the dark ages which followed it, we have hitherto been shut out from all means of acquiring any acquaintance with the intellectual condition of the first societies; Mr Erro's system passing through this night of time, mounts up to its very dawn, and there he finds the origin of his language in the transcendant perfection of its construction:—admitting his analytical expositions, we arrive necessarily at one of these two conclusions,—either that this perfect idiom together with the science embraced by it, was infused by the Creator,—or that the intellectual power of the first societies of men was infinitely superior to that in any period known to history,—which were in effect to suppose the primeval man to have had a less defective organization than that which belongs to the species at this time.

Certainly, if the Mosaic account of the creation is correct, and this the author supposes, he could not offer a stronger argument in favor of his opinion—no other is wanting than this; God ordered Adam to give suitable names to all the animals; this supposes in Adam a previous and perfect acquaintance with nature. But the relation of Moses apart, the argument in favor of Mr Erro's opinions furnished by the philosophical perfection of the language which he examines, seems to be of sufficient force,—for it is the only language of such a character:—all the idioms now in use, though centuries have been employed in the improvement of them, are full of imperfections,—how then can it

* This same consideration would seem to authorize an opinion, notwithstanding the theories of the geologists, that our race has suffered by more than one deluge; that the deluges have been partial and not universal; and that amongst the last of these vast commotions, may have been one on this continent. I have somewhere seen a conjecture that our chain of lakes are but the remains of a flood.

be supposed that man in his infancy was able to form a perfect language ! for those who adopt the Jewish chronology this the author's argument is still more positive, for according to that computation, from the creation to the deluge was a period of only sixteen hundred years ; too short a period certainly for such a wonderful intellectual progress as the formation of a perfect language supposes ; and this is still more evident when we consider what was the state of science at the coming of Christ, 2384 years after the deluge ; and even what it is at this time 1900 years later ; this last period too including nearly 400 years of a progress unexampled in rapidity. If the high antiquity of the basque language is satisfactorily proved by its philosophical perfection, then, as it is impossible to admit the supposition of its having been formed by the genius of man, we cannot altogether withhold our assent to Mr Erro's conclusion ;—and surely there is not anything shocking to our reason in the proposition :—there must have been an existence before man existed,—the cause of his existence ;—man then was created ;—he is evidently the most perfect work (the combination of moral and physical faculties considered) of the whole creation ;—it is evident also that he was made social, consequently must have been created in society ; a language then must have been an ingredient in his constitution, a language corresponding in the perfection of its structure with the other attributes of his nature, and in harmony with the other creations of the first cause.

The author's assertion, that no language with which we are acquainted has been formed like the Euscaran of natural elements, cannot be disputed ; thus we see that no living language is fixed, all are more or less conventional, and subjected to perpetual alterations ; this is so true, that the idioms of the nations most advanced in civilization, now so much vary from what they were some few centuries ago, as to be scarcely cognizable in the early writers ; and some of our own writers, even of a comparatively late date, cannot be understood without a glossary. This multiplicity of imperfect and ever varying languages, has

been used in argument against Mr Erro's system ; but the fact when duly considered, ought rather to operate in his favor ; for firstly we are able to trace by etymology the derivation of some from others of these languages, and secondly because in most of them have been discovered some radical characteristics which countenance the opinion that they all had a common origin ;—and again, it were absurd to suppose that man when created was gifted with many languages, whilst nothing is more reasonable than to conclude that the Creator gave to him one language adequate to all his purposes :—the deluge and its necessary effects will account very satisfactorily for the loss of that primitive language, and for the formation of other idioms ; the remains of a primitive language found in these, at the same time that it proves them to be derivative, authorizes the search after, because it affords a possibility of discovering the primitive entire. And again, as to the probability that language was infused, is it not strengthened when we consider the imperfections of all the languages which have been formed by man subsequent to the deluge,—it would appear then that the formation of a perfect language is beyond the faculty of man. It will not be denied but that a fixed order and rule of action was given in the creation to all its elements, in man as well as throughout nature,—in other words that the creation was complete ; can language an essential principle in the nature of man have been made an exception ?

It is a gloomy and wretchedly hopeless doctrine which some philosophers have founded on an observation of what is commonly called the "*savage state*," assimilating our species to that of the brute ;—teaching that we are distinguished from it only by the faculty of cultivating our intellect, and that all the advantages which we possess over the brutes have resulted merely from the long continued exercise of that faculty.—Surely no proposition is more incontestible than this, that man is the most perfect work of the animated creation ; it is impossible then to

admit the supposition that society commenced in the "savage state," for this is not having a defined limit, the hypothesis if admitted would carry us back to a condition infinitely inferior to that of the lowest species of the brute creation ;—if then we find in some regions tribes of savages in a state of physical misery and destitution, or of intellectual ineptitude or imbecility, rendering them in all respects inferior to the brute creation, we must consider such a state to be a degradation, however produced, from a "*state of nature*," the state in which the Creator originally placed our species. Is it not then perfectly philosophic, to consider the "savage state" as a consequence of the deluge ; and is it not equally philosophic as well as consolatory, to conclude that man, so superior to all other animals in his organization, was created in the full and complete exercise and enjoyment of all his faculties physical and moral ; on this plan all the inferior animals have been made, why not man the most perfect ; can it be supposed that he was cast forth into the world to improve his intellect, or to perish in ignorance as chance might direct ; and without even the instinct of the brute to supply the place of the knowledge which was withheld from him, and which though indispensable to his well being, he could not acquire but after a painful existence through many generations.

The "savage state" then is not a "state of nature," but an accident ; the learned researches of our American philologists have made it evident that the remote ancestry of our Indian tribes have been a "*civilized*" people ; it is presumable that similar success may hereafter result from similar investigations of the languages used by the still more barbarous tribes of Asia and Africa.

Mr Morenas a learned orientalist, (of France) treating this subject (in the *Revue Encyclopedique*) cites the authority of professor Vater, to prove that *our Indian idioms have a great analogy with the "tchuschtschi" in Asia, with the Congo in Africa, and with the basque in Europe* ; this analogy is in what

are considered as *Hebrew roots*.* Lord Montboddo (*on language*) mentions a dictionary and grammar of the language of the Garani a people of Paraguay, this was made by a Jesuit and published in Madrid (1639,) it shows that the language of the Garani is as regularly constructed as any European language, and that in many respects it is superior to all of them; amongst its excellences is a first person plural *inclusive*, that is, which includes the speaker and the person spoken to; as also another *exclusive*, or excluding the person spoken to†: Lord M. observes, “*I think it impossible that they who have made so little progress in the other arts of life should have invented so complete a language*.” he makes a similar remark on the language of the Algonquins, a language of a most curious and scientific construction he says; there have been strange migrations and mixtures of nations at different periods, and indeed there is hardly any thing that we can conceive to be possible that has not happened in a long course of time; this is an observation of Herodotus. The same Lord Montboddo speaking of the Celtic language observes, “it is spread over a great part of the world and is to be found in places so remote from each other, as to show that there must have been a most extraordinary intercourse and communication amongst men in ancient times.” He then goes on to state a highly interesting fact reported to him by a certain learned French Jesuit; one of the priests of the mission to which that Jesuit was attached, having lost his way in the woods, strayed into the country of the Esquimaux, and

*Eusebius in his “*Evangelical Preparation*,” speaking of the Hebrew letters, observes, that they are the only signs which have significant names; hence he infers that they are the most ancient;—this same characteristic in the basque letters (from which the Hebrew were derived) is the basis of Mr Erro’s system.

† By the late investigations of our American philologists, it is found that a plural in this form, and also a dual, are general characteristics of the Indian languages of this continent; as they are in all the languages of the South sea islanders. In the Cherokee language many other peculiarities are to be observed, and some excellences which fully entitle it to partake with the Garani of Lord Montboddo’s encomium; amongst the most remarkable of these excellences, is the division of nouns into two classes, one applying to animate, and the other to inanimate objects.

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there resided long enough to learn their language ; he then left them and returned to the French settlement ; sometime afterwards, happening to go on board a ship of his nation, he met with a basque sailor with whom he entered into conversation, and he found to his great astonishment, that he was able to understand the sailor's basque, and that the sailor understood equally well his Esquimaux language ; from this the priest inferred that the basque was a dialect of the Celtic language ; if the exact truth in this narrative is merely that the two languages were found to have many words in common, this is a fact of sufficient importance in the argument.

I have been induced to dwell on this opinion, that what is called "the savage state" is a consequence of the deluge, and not "the state of nature," more than would seem to be proper in a preface, by an earnest desire to bespeak all the reader's attention to the reasoning of Mr Erro as far as it affects this point ; and to predispose his mind to receive with favor a system, the principal beauty of which, (in my view) is, that it goes to prove the proper "*state of nature*," to have been a state of civilization, and of the highest intellectual cultivation of which our species is susceptible. "Fixing our view (says the author in his prologue) by means of the Euscaran language on ages anterior to the deluge, we shall observe that the doctrine of universal motion is not a discovery Ægyptian or Babylonian ; we shall see a system unknown to the moderns, a beautiful simple system, embracing by the same laws the movement of the heavenly bodies, and the vegetation of the most humble plants ; comprehending under a few general causes the entire empire of nature ; wholly free from the absurdity of our methods, in which the multitude of rules constantly imagined to explain her operations, prove only how far we have deviated from the simple principles by which she preserves the universe. We shall see that long before the existence of Copernican philosophers, the first societies knew that the sun was fixed in the centre of the universe ; that it was neither Hippocrates, nor Harvey, who dis-

covered the circulation of the blood ; that in the doctrine of generation principles were admitted, which even to this day our physical science is unacquainted with ; that the year was regulated to 365 days calculating from the winter solstice ; that before there were Ægyptians, the Zodiac was invented ; and that before such persons as Pythagoras and Plato were known, the harmony of numbers, and the order and proportion in which they stood in the plan of nature by the disposal of the Supreme Creator, were perfectly understood."

It will not escape the reader's observation, that the author's philosophical investigations have been restricted by considerations belonging to a respect for sacred history, and that his argument so limited, is at times somewhat *controlled* by the Mosaic relation : it is evident that his system if developed to its utmost extent, might endanger a great many opinions which are now fixed, and considered to be salutary ; a perfect language existing at the creation, must have been the language of the Creator, and therefore have contained all truth ; a complete analysis which should expose those truths, would necessarily destroy by its paramount authority all the systems of man's invention. Be this as it may, it is fit that on this delicate point we should receive the author's own explanation of his reserve, and admit as sufficient the reasons which he has assigned for the bounds given to his discussions.

"As regards the proofs in the argument of this work, (says he) though I might have carried to as great a degree of certitude the examination of other sciences not herein alluded to, I have rather chosen as evidence of the antiquity and superior excellence of the basque language over all the languages of the earth, such matter, as at the same time that it suffices for my purpose, serves to confirm the great plan of our august religion, and the relation of the first events of the world as left to us by the sacred historian Moses ; thus dissipating those ridiculous and fabulous pretensions of some extravagant and unreflecting authors, who in these modern times have attempted to confound

and obscure our worship, and at the same time manifesting the true origin of the ancient cosmogonies and theogonies, and of the mystery of the holy fables of the gentiles to which so much importance has been attached as a means of assailing religion ; as though the indestructable foundations of that august work could depend on the chimeras and extravagances of human reason."

Some modern author has said "the construction of language is in itself the history of the people to whom it belongs:" certain it is that analysis in language is the only means by which we can acquire any knowledge of ages unknown to history ; hence the immense importance of philological investigation* : in that persuasion, and observing the growing taste in the United States for this branch of philosophy ; under the encouragement also of a distinguished scholar, whose labors have principally contributed to its advancement, I submit to the learned in a succinct form, the claims of the basque to be considered as the primitive language of the human race, the only perfect language ; or in the author's words, " a faithful copy of nature ; an irresistible witness to the most remote events, and an archive of the precious acquirements of the first ages."

GEORGE W. ERVING.

Boston, July 15, 1829.

* Doctor Murray in his "*History of European Languages*," well observes, that the " advantages which have accrued to history, religion, the philosophy of the mind, and the progress of society, the benefits which have resulted from the Greek and Roman taste, in short, *all that a knowledge of the progress and attainments of man in past ages can bestow on the present, has reached it through the medium of philology.*"

NOTE

OF

AUTHORS IN THE BASQUE LANGUAGE.

THE greater part of the writers in the basque language are mentioned by Mr Erro ; (Part I, chap. i and v,) viz :—Don Luis Velasquez, Don Juan Francisco Andres, the Jesuit Rajas, Don Francisco de La Huerta, the Jesuits Larramendi and Torreros, Luis Carlos Zuniga, Boyer, and Don Pablo Pedro de Astarloa.

Besides these I cannot find that there have been more than four authors of any reputation ; i. e. D'Iharce, Harriet, Etcheberri, and Izluela.

Those who have written more especially on the excellences of the basque language, are, (besides Erro,) Larramendi, Astarloa, and D'Iharce ; Larramendi also published a dictionary in 1745 ; another dictionary was made by Etcheberri ; Izluela printed at St Sebastians in 1824 a very curious work on the ancient usages, dances, games, &c., of Guipuscoa, with this title ; “Guipuscoaco dantza gogoangarien condaira, edo istoria beren sonu zar, eta itz neurto edo versoaquin.”

Larramendi in his time knew but of ten books printed in *pure* basque, and all of them were on religious matters, viz :—Two Catechisms, published in 1733 ; Imitation of Jesus Christ, in 1720 ; Hymns, 1630 ; Manual of Devotion ; Spiritual Exercises ; Sermons by Pedro Arganaratz, 1141 ; Christian Doctrine, 1626 ; Prayers and Hymns, 1686 ; Prayers, &c. by Materre, 1616, and a work on Penitence, by Axular, 1642.

There were several other books of the same character published in various provinces where the language was not so pure. The first book in point of date is not mentioned by Larramendi, it was a complete translation of the New Testament printed at Rochelle in 1571.

Astarloa engaged in an analysis of the words of the basque language; and in this hopeless task he persevered till the day of his death, with a zeal almost incredible, when we consider what he says himself of the copiousness of that language; he asserts, (as quoted by Lecluse) that it has 4,126,564,929 words! not comprising any having more than three syllables! and these are in no small quantity; "quatro mille ciento veinte y seis millones, quinientas sesenta y quatro mil novecientas veinte y nueve voces monosilabas, disilabas, y trisilabas; en este calculo no entran voces de mayor numero de silabas," (says he.) Of this immensity of words he was not able to complete the analysis of more than 10,000 in ten years. Here is a calculation which goes infinitely beyond the most extravagant estimate of the most extravagant of the Chinese literati; (this, now indeed reduced to 20,000 *monosyllables*,) by what method or mathematical process Mr Astarloa was able to reach such a result, is, I allow, wholly inconceivable; yet if the language approaches in any degree to the vast copiousness which he ascribes to it, hence I think may be drawn the strongest argument in favor of its primitive character, and of its having been infused; for the possibility of its having been formed by man, is yet more remote; and the probability that it embraced every species of knowledge, is augmented; and thus no small portion of the abundant and learned labors which have appeared on the origin and affinity of languages, with the various inferences which have been drawn from them as to the derivation of some nations from others, and finally the ancient pretensions of the Celtic, Teutonic, Persic, and Sanscrit idioms—all these vanish before the superior importance, or are dissolved in the superior and well established claims of the Basque.

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PART I.

CHAPTER I.

Some Account of the Attempts heretofore made to Explain the primitive Alphabetical Characters of Spain, and to Interpret its Inscriptions and Medals.

THERE are but few literary subjects which in these latter times have more occupied,—though with such few solid results, the researches of men of genius, than the laborious and dry study of the ancient monuments of Spain. Juan Andres Estran, the archbishop of Tarragona, Antonio Augustin, Bernardo Alderte, Uztarroz, Flores, and a number of other Spaniards well known in the republic of letters, as well as some foreigners of equal merit, after much and studious investigation, have been obliged to abandon the pursuit;—the most persevering of them arriving at merely plausible conjecture, proving nothing, or adventuring on interpretations unsatisfactory to the learned world, and probably even to themselves.

Nevertheless the labors of some of these distinguished scholars deserve special mention, as having been to a certain small degree productive, though not so in proportion to their meritorious efforts.

Don Luis Velasquez was able to discover some Celtiberian letters, but as to others he was wholly perplexed, so that his alphabet is full of errors. Doctor Don Juan Francisco Andres, the Jesuit Rajas and Don Francisco de la Huerta, these originated the opinion that the inscriptions on the Celtiberic-coins were primitive Spanish letters; the Jesuits Larremendi and Terreros advanced a little further, and ventured to assert—that these were basque characters,—which opinion they main-

tained in the firm persuasion that the original language of Spain had been the basque. The subject remained in this state till the year 1801, when the priest Luis Carlos Zuniga published a paper, in which he attempted to explain the inscriptions on some coins, but without any considerable success, for he was deficient in the knowledge of the basque language. Jacob Barry, Dutch consul at Seville, also endeavored to explain some of the characters—on certain Betican coins. It appears by his correspondence that he considered these “*turdetanian characters to be very easy of explanation*,” but from the mistakes which he made it is evident that he did not understand the idiom;—the fact is, that in his time this study occupied the attention of many learned men, Mr Barry was ambitious of appearing amongst them, but being totally unqualified, he failed to produce any thing worth notice. Boyer was not more fortunate in his attempt to explain the Celtiberian characters; his alphabet and interpretations are very defective and incorrect. In fine, a genuine explication of the Spanish medals and inscriptions is at present an enigma which the discordances of the learned who have attempted a solution have served still further to perplex. This is one of those secrets buried under a mass of prejudice still sustained by some of the most ingenious writers, who have not hesitated to pronounce it to be “a secret never to be discovered;”—“which has been always and must still remain unknown;”—“which is in a language now lost,” &c. thus contributing to discourage others from an attempt to elucidate it.

Notwithstanding these assertions, and the little confidence which I may have in my own limited capacity of making any very important progress in a matter which the most learned antiquarians have been obliged to abandon in despair; yet I engage in it not without hope of overcoming its difficulties, being persuaded that the disappointment of those who have gone before me has been wholly owing to their imperfect acquaintance with the basque language.

The commencement of my investigations was in 1798, when by a rare accident I became possessed of several Celtiberian coins, and though I was then aware of the great labor which many learned men had fruitlessly employed in the interpretation of similar monuments, yet my vehement desire of deciphering them overcame all discouraging considerations, and impelled me to encounter the difficulties and obscurities to be removed before I could establish my system on solid principles,

and found on it some progress in this branch of antiquarian research. During the same year, I happened to visit the city of Soria; its position is in ancient Celtiberia, surrounded by the ruins of many other cities which were formerly of importance; there I was enabled to collect a considerable number of ancient coins, which together with some drawings and plates of old collections, and the comparison of these with my coins, afforded sufficient light to enable me to form a clear idea of the true import of the primitive signs,—as shall be more particularly explained hereafter.

*The Basques will certainly see with great satisfaction, those primitive characters by which their illustrious ancestors trans-

*The reader will find that throughout this work—"Basques" and *Euscaldunes* are denominations indiscriminately made use of by the author to designate the same people; it will also be observed that in some places the language is called *basque* and in other places *Euscaran*;—it is proper therefore to explain this variety:—it may have been here and there employed merely to change the diction, but the name *basque* has been more frequently used because more familiar to the ear, being modern as well as ancient. The *Euscaran* language (with some differences in dialect) extended over the greater part of Spain,—it is now confined to a few mountainous provinces on either side of the Pyrennes, inhabited by the descendants of the *Euscaldunes*;—these are all called "*basques*," their original *provincial* name still preserved;—hence the propriety of the same denomination applied to the language.

The Etymology of these and some other names has been furnished to me by Don José Francisco de Aizquebel a learned basque now residing in Paris—in a note of which the following is a translation.

"The basque language is called *Euskara*—its etymology—is in the word "*Eusk-i*—which means the *Sun*—and the word—*era*—which signifies mode or manner;—taken together—*manner of the Sun*—or of the *East*; for in the *Euscaran* language "*Sun*" is often used to denote the "*East*." The words—" *Euskara*"—" *Euskaera*" are also used.

"*Euskeldunack* (the basque people) has its etymology in the word *eusker*—and the relative participle *dunak* or *duenak*—which means those who hold or possess—that is to say *those who hold or possess the Euskara* (or basque language.)

Note. "This single word which fixes and determines the origin of our nation, leaves me without doubt as to the oriental origin of our ancestors."

"*Basco* is a syncopé of *Baso-ko* and is derived from *Baso*—woods (or forests)—and *ko* of—that is, of the forests—from this has been formed the Castilian word *Bascongada* (Basque.)

"*Bizkaya*—is derived from *biz*—or *piz* (foam, spume) and *kaya* (port or gulph)—that is to say a "*foamy gulph*"—applied to the tempestuous character of the sea on the whole coast of Cantabria.

"*Navarra*—is derived from the word *nava* (plain) and *arra* (inhabitant)—that is, inhabitants of the plain in contradistinction to—*Basco*—or of the forests.

"*Erdera* this is the name which we give to the Castilian language and it is derived either from *Erdu-era* or *Erdi-era*—if from *Erdu* (arrived or come)—and *era* (manner)—then it says—in the manner of the comers, alluding to the Phenecians and Carthaginians or other nations who entered into Spain subsequently to the *Euscaldunes*,—if the second is the true ety-

ferred to metal and stone their ideas, in the very language which we still use :—herein will be a new proof of the high antiquity of their origin, and of the possession of the country which they now inhabit ; a possession more ancient than can be boasted of by any nation in the world. Spaniards in general will learn what was the universal language of their country, and the origin of its first settlers ; and if hitherto a captious criticism has required of us to produce in monuments, medals and inscriptions, proofs of the antiquity of our Euscaran language in Spain,—this cavil shall now cease to have any weight, for I will prove that the most ancient monuments which our nation possess, are basque ; basque the characters engraved on them ; and basque the primitive religion represented by the figures hitherto so erroneously interpreted.*

mology then it is *Erdi* (middle) and *era* (manner) and means—*meridional manner*, referring to the Sun in the middle of its course.”

“As to the word *Euscaldunes*—this means those who use the Euscaran language, *duna*—in basque is he who uses.”

It may be well to add here the explanation which I have received from the same gentleman of a few other words which will be frequently met with in the following pages.

“*Celtiberian*”—refers to that territory which lays south of the Ebro beginning with Old Castile—it is derived from *celt*—(beyond)—and *iber* which is the proper name of the river.

“*Betica*”—which is a part of Celtiveria (now Andalusia) has its etymology in—*Be* (low)—the letter *t* is Euphonical merely, and *ica* (country)—the low country.

“*Turdelania*”—(or Turtetania) this is a part of what is now called Murcia.

“*Laburtania*”—is that territory on the French side of the Pyrennes which the Spaniards call the country of Labor, the French Labour or Labourt—and it extends from the Bidaossa to the Landes—the name is composed with the word *Labur* or *Lapur*—which means a robber.

It would seem that the Basques considered all the population of the French side of the Pyrennes in no favorable point of view, thus what is called Bordeaux—and which the Gascons flatter themselves has derived its name from its situation on the borders of a large river, appears on the contrary to have it explained by the basque language in a sense not very creditable to its ancient character—Burgala or Burdala—(Burdigala by the Romans) is a brothel—the original composition of the word—is *bur*, a dirty place (hence burgh in the German—boroughs in English) and *gala*—which means—showy.

Barcelona—from *Barcel* prison—and *ona* good.

*These proofs are in a variety of stones, coins, and other very curious monuments examined by Mr Erro towards the conclusion of his first book, the portion which I have not translated for the reasons mentioned in my preface.

CHAPTER II.

On the Antiqueness of the Art of Writing.

ONE of the most admirable productions of the human genius is the art of writing ; inferior to none in utility, essential to the progress and perfection of all others, it forms a very powerful bond in the social union. It enables us to perpetuate the impression of fleeting words, to give a precise form to our most subtle ideas, and to transmit to posterity a lively image of our own times : yet the author of this important invention is unknown, though we have not failed to preserve and to celebrate the memory of those who have made discoveries of much less importance to society.

The Ægyptians, a vain people who endeavored to appropriate to themselves all discoveries in all the sciences, have attributed the glory of the one in question to their Jout,—the Phœnecians to their Jaut, and the Greeks to Cadmus according to some authors, and to Mercury according to others ;—finally some ecclesiastic authors have given this honor to Moses, who, as they say, transferred to alphabetical writing the hieroglyphics which were anterior to his time ; but putting aside these various pretensions growing out of that national partiality, which naturally enough, lays claim to the honor of useful inventions, it is proper that we should examine the matter more severely, and by the light of impartial reason.

Ever since the creation of the world man has been in possession of arts and inventions essential to his well being, and also of such as are contributive to the charms of his social existence :—agriculture and architecture are of the first class ; music and poetry of the second.

The first man, deprived of the favor of God, had by his sin opened the way to all the evils of life ; seeking a remedy for these according to the intelligence with which he found himself endowed, he began to invent arts of necessity, and then those of enjoyment, or mere convenience. Thus Adam and his sons (according to the sacred writings) were occupied with agriculture and the care of herds,—many years before Enos invented harmonic sounds with which to give utterance in hymns to the gratitude filling his heart, when he contemplated the works of the Creator ;—this art was preserved in his family

and gradually perfected through six generations to Jubal, who invented the lyre and the organ. If man did not receive the knowledge of letters with his other endowments at the time of the creation, he must at a very early period have felt the want of, and invented them. It is in his nature to admire grand and marvellous events, and to record them, especially when they have an immediate relation to himself. The creation of the world,—of himself and woman;—the immediate communication in which he was placed with God himself;—the dominion which was given to him over all other creatures; the magnificent views of nature just from the hands of the Creator in all the splendor of its divine origin;—the paradise lost, but promised to be restored to his descendants;—such an epoch of his existence he must have desired to transmit to his posterity by a written record, and not to leave exposed to the chances of imperfect tradition. From the sacred writings we also learn, that Cain the elder son of Adam was the founder of a city; from that time the augmenting population spread over the face of the earth in families—whose common origin, arts, usages and regulations, rendered indispensable a communication amongst them by writing. In all ages the genius of man has been inventive, in that age when he enjoyed a very extended existence, and therefore was better able to bring to perfection his inventions, he must have found out the art of writing—amongst those which were most essential to the social union;—again, the moral corruption of a nation is ordinarily the result of excessive luxury;—it is evident then, that the vices, which according to Moses, brought on mankind the judgment of the deluge, suppose a state of society far advanced beyond those simple arts which are necessary to sustain life according to the frugal ordinances of nature;—thus it is to be presumed that commerce and agriculture, and sciences in general, had reached a degree of perfection at which without the art of writing they could not have arrived.

But to return to the traditions of the most ancient people, Phœnecians and Egyptians, each attributing to itself the honor of the alphabet by their *Jaaut* or *Jout*;—may not this name be *Jaun*, *Jova* or *Jouda*—names given to the Creator in the primitive language.

The traditions of nations have in them generally a foundation of truth,—though in the course of ages disfigured and confused in its circumstances so as to obscure its origin. Thus the Phœnecians descendants from Canaan grandson of Noah,

having received the tradition that *Jaun* or *Jova* had given to their remote ancestor Adam, the knowledge of letters and the art of writing, in their ignorance of God—conceived the invention to be human, and attributed to a mortal the supposed author of it, the name of the deity whom they knew not. Moses the sacred historian, and a most learned man, relates in his Pentateuch the events of nearly three thousand years, with as much exactness and precision of details, as could have done any one who had been a personal witness of them ; these comprise a multitude of generations and names very difficult to be preserved in the memory by tradition, particularly as they are in a strange language ; names also of cities and rivers, and an exact catalogue of the ages of the patriarchs and of the first individuals of the human race. I well know that our mother the Catholic church teaches that these holy books are from the inspiration and revelation of God, and so we her children believe,—but even without this superior authority, I hold it to be probable, that the art of writing having been in use from the first ages of the creation, Moses may have found in those written memorials of the first people which were preserved by Noah, an entire history of all the most important events which had occurred down to his time ; events which were doubtless notorious to the people whom he led, and amongst whom he wrote, for the purpose of reminding them incessantly of the great benefits bestowed on them by the Creator. I am the more inclined to this opinion by the authority of that learned historian Flavius Josephus,—who though a writer much posterior, yet is considered in the republic of letters as one of the first authorities, as well on account of his profound erudition, as for the particular respect due to the notices extracted by him from the annals of Chaldea which he had examined with great attention, and which as we know contained the most ancient accounts of the world ;—now Josephus says in his work on the Jewish antiquities “Seth (son of Adam) as soon as he had arrived at the age of reason, gave himself up wholly to the exercise of virtue ; and he had children who succeeded him, and imitated him in this course : these lived together in perfect union and harmony, and without suffering any adversity ;—they were the inventors of astronomy, and knowing by a prediction from Adam that the earth was to be purified by water and fire, and fearing lest their scientific discoveries might thus be lost to mankind, they erected two columns, one of brick and one of stone, and on each of these, they wrote all the

knowledge which they had acquired, to the end that if the waters should destroy the column of brick, that of stone remaining, mankind might be informed, by what was written on it, of the progress made in science." From this authority is to be inferred not merely that the art of writing was known in the time of Seth,—but anterior to it;—for it is not to be supposed that those who have so particularly displayed the merits of that illustrious man and his offspring,—and have acquainted us with their knowledge in astronomy, would have omitted to specify amongst their attainments this most important art of writing had it been one of their discoveries. It is therefore to be presumed that the family of Seth learnt this art from Adam, as also the science of numbers which opened the way to their astronomical observations and calculations. There is a passage in the Grecian geographer Strabo, which appears to me is also to the purpose;—extolling the civilization of the Turtitans, he says, "they preserved written memorials of antiquity and have (as is said) poems and laws in verse, six thousand years old." This passage of Strabo has given rise to contestations amongst the learned, some believing it to be an absurd and exaggerated boast of the Turtitans, and others defending it by means of a reduction of the solar years to years of three or four months duration;—but both these opinions may be combated by arguments of very considerable weight;—the first opinion is opposed to what Strabo received from credible witnesses;—to the traditions of that learned people; and to the very documents which they cited and produced; for Strabo says expressly, that they preserved "*written memorials of antiquity*:" the second opinion is founded on a merely arbitrary system, for the testimony in its favor which is attempted to be drawn from Xenophon in his treatise "*Æquivocis temporum*," where it is said that "*the Iberians ordinarily calculate by the year of four months and rarely by the solar year*," has against it the fatal presumption of being an interpolation by the famous Dominican, of Viterbo:—besides, Strabo was a very judicious man, and one of the most ingenious critics of his time; he treated particularly of all that related to Spain, and it is most probable that he had not passed without notice this singular mode of computation, had it in fact existed there;—but neither he, nor the Roman historians, have made the least mention of it, notwithstanding the frequent opportunities of doing so presented in their annals:—nor could a man of his profound erudition be ignorant of the years of antiquity as calculated from

the creation ; he must at least have been acquainted with the best accredited opinions of the learned men of his own time ;—therefore, in referring to the ancient Turtitanan writings, it is not to be supposed that he would have given his authority to the opinion of the learned Spaniards who had founded their assertion, as to the antiquity of their language, on the very documents notoriously in their archives, unless he had deemed that opinion to be highly probable. Those who treat this narration as an absurd exaggeration of history, very well know that an exact rule of computation has not yet been generally agreed on ;—can they pretend to tell us how many years had passed from the creation to the time of Strabo ? This question has given rise to various opinions ;—amongst others of the last century was that of Bayle, which states, that from the creation to the coming of the Messiah, that is to within a few years of the time of Strabo, there had passed six thousand one hundred years, an hundred more than the calculation of the Grecian geographer ;—but even by the computation of our own calendar, it is evident that the world had five thousand two hundred years of age in the time of Strabo ;—hence as there is the best reason to suppose that the writings of the Turtitans had preserved the records of events immediately following the creation, the assertion of the Spaniards as to the precise period, cannot be considered to be much if at all exaggerated, seeing that to this day there are differences in opinion on the matter. Nevertheless I will not insist on the narration of Strabo as unquestionable,—it suffices for my purpose so far as to prove that the Turtitanan writings go back to the first ages of the world,—and that the origin of writing is to be sought for in that high antiquity ;—this opinion receives still further confirmation from the authority of Pliny, who, speaking of the antiqueness of writing, says “*the use of letters is from eternity.*” As to the origin of the writings of Betica, I will hereafter expose my own opinion and the powerful reasons by which it is supported ; and in the alphabet which follows will be found, I trust, not a few good additional reasons for concluding that the invention of letters is to be sought for very early after the creation :—This is certain, that the Phœnecians, Assyrians, or Cananeans (*the same people under different names) to whom has been attributed

**The same people*—that is to say, these different denominations of the same people are found in various authors, but in fact the Assyrians were a very different people from the Syrians and Phœnecians, at least it is evident that Pliny speaks of these as of three distinct nations.

the invention of letters, have an alphabet which is not their own,—but which they must have inherited from a people much more ancient than they ;—the names of their letters are not of Phœnecian origin, nor can the etymology or rational principle of them be found in the Phœnecian language ;—but it may be asked what nation can be more ancient than that whose origin may be traced up to the division of the first language of man ? I answer—the primitive people,—the people who possessed the primitive language, and who had doubtless an immemorial alphabet ;—the same which the Phœnecians afterwards used with but little alteration ;—this inference arises from the fact that no other than the primitive language can give a suitable explanation of the names and value of the letters, and this would not have been so had the alphabet been of Cananean invention, for then the letters would have been conformable to the genius of that language,—and might have been explained by it as they now are by the primitive idiom.

CHAPTER III.

On the Origin of Writing and the Antiqueness of the Celtiberian Alphabet.

THE existence of the art of writing in the first ages of the world being allowed,—it remains for us to ascertain the characters which were then used ;—this investigation may appear to some persons to be unnecessary, since according to the general opinion of the learned it must be fruitless ; nevertheless proofs are not wanting which may give to this historical point that degree of probability which history admits as in general sufficient with regard to events of remote antiquity.

Some would persuade themselves that hieroglyphics were the first alphabets used :—others say, that as the sciences were not perfect from the beginning, but were gradually perfected by long experience and meditation, so of writing, they suppose that from its origin it was not of that facility, which as now, enables us to commit to paper our most minute thoughts, our most delicate sentiments, and our most tender affections ; but

that at the beginning images and symbols supplied the purpose of writing ;—for example, that eternity was represented by a snake with his tail in his mouth, the world by a ball, the passion of anger by a lion, a king by a sceptre,—and so on :—by such means, as is conjectured, men were able to explain all their thoughts and to preserve the records of the first ages. Now those who think thus, assume a general principle, and without allowing of any exception, build on it the whole machinery of their system and erudition ; but a mere glance at the subject will satisfy us, that by such means it had been impossible to preserve that minute narration of the events of the primitive ages which Moses makes us acquainted with ;—hieroglyphics could only have served to transmit in gross some principal occurrences ;—not to relate the conversations of God with Adam,—of Eve and the serpent ;—to record the names of the patriarchs, their ages, their opinions ;—the measure and proportions of the ark ; and a variety of other minute circumstances ;—it was by writing only that these could have been preserved till the time of Moses.

It is certain that all languages, the basque only excepted, present innumerable difficulties in perfecting the art of writing. We cannot conceive how, without incessant and profound application throughout many ages, man was able to comprehend those principles which constitute the excellence of this wonderful invention,—the mechanism of its several parts, and the application of a determinate character to each modulation of the voice in pronunciation ; these certainly are labors of very great prolixity, and the general opinion is, that the human intellect could not have achieved them but by very slow degrees and after numberless experiments ;—the learned will see that these difficulties are very much diminished when they examine the basque language and its admirable composition.

Our reason as well as religion presents to us in a single individual the origin of our race :—this individual was created with all the qualities which we acknowledge to be essentially in man's nature ; having been created social, he was endowed with all the dispositions belonging to the social state ;—he had consequently a language, and that language must have been inspired by the Author of his being ; from the sacred writings we learn that this first man but a few moments after he was created held conversation with God,—hence alone we must infer that the Creator had enriched his intellect with profound and extensive knowledge : we see, as stated by Moses in the book of

Genesis, that as soon as God had created the beasts and birds, he carried them to Adam that he might give names to them ;— here again is made evident the extraordinary degree of wisdom which God had bestowed on the first individual of the human race,—for the names which Adam gave importing so exactly the characteristic qualities by which each species was distinguished—suppose in him a perfect knowledge of all nature. It is equally evident that Adam had as perfect knowledge of the language in which he spoke, since he employed its most nice expressions in the names which he gave to the productions of the creation. He knew that this language was composed of various members each having its representation marked by nature in the modulations of the voice ; he knew that these were in a determinate number ; the import of each ; and that all united and used with the discrimination and accuracy which the Creator had ordained, formed the true and scientific language of nature :—thus he knew that the modulation of the voice in pronouncing the *i* always signified penetration,—in the *g* contractedness,—in the *b* profundity—in the *d* multitude, and so on ; such he found to be invariably the principle of his language ;—and herein is the origin of the art of writing.

The number of the modulations of the voice in pronunciation, and the signification of each modulation, being known to Adam, as they must necessarily have been, since he spoke an original inspired language,—was alone in the world, and could not therefore take from any precedent those very apposite names which he gave to all things,—hence it was easy for him to mark his ideas on the sand (which we may suppose to have been his first tablet) in characters which indicated the value of the modulations, and gave an idea of the representation belonging to them ;—the characters made equal in number to the modulations with which he was acquainted ;—for example, he knew that the modulation *a* denoted extension, and to mark this signification he invented a character,—not one arbitrary and insignificant, but that which presents at the first view of it an idea of its value,—(see the plate)—indeed nothing could so naturally represent extension as measure, and at a time when there had not been invented any means of ascertaining it otherwise than by steps,—the representation of these by the angle which the legs form in making them, gave the most exact idea which the mind could receive through the sight ;—he knew that the modulation *i*, always denoted penetration, and therefore he represented it by the form of an arrow. (See the

plate.) After the fall of man he was under the necessity of inventing weapons, as well for his defence as to procure subsistence;—it may be reasonably supposed, that the arrow, one of the most simple, was one of the first of those weapons;—and what more perfect sign could he have used to represent penetration,—this is precisely the signification of the *i* in the Euscaran alphabet. The modulation of the *o* in basque words signifies roundness and height, and in abstract ideas infinite;—it was to represent these qualities that the first man formed the sign *o*,—in pronouncing this letter nature itself determines its form by closing the extremities of the mouth and elevating the lips so as to complete a circle;—then as to its abstract signification, what can give a better idea of infinite than that which has neither beginning nor end:—the same reasoning applies to consonants as to vowels; the modulation of the *c* always signifies *cut* in basque words, and therefore it is represented by the figure of a sickle, which for reaping or cutting herbs for the cattle, must have been one of the first invented of agricultural instruments, and it is thus that we find it on many of the most ancient basque coins. In this way, by means of the apt application of certain material instruments invented by man for purposes similar to those for which nature intended his modulations by means of the value which she gave to them in the pronunciation, did the first societies proceed in the formation of the primitive alphabet.

I am well aware that this system will appear arbitrary to those who regard with prepossession all discoveries which lay without the circle of their acquirements, or are in any degree opposed to their principles;—but the observations of philosophy on the wisdom of the first operations of mankind, are in accord with my opinions. It must be allowed that the inventor of writing had an exact knowledge of the value of the modulations of the voice;—nature, which was his master, early taught him that to make his invention useful to mankind, it was necessary to render ideas transmissible by means of signs, the representation of which denoting the civil utility of their archetypes, would lead directly to the knowledge of their signification, without recourse to social convention which depends on the capriciousness of man. The hoe,—the arrow,—the ladder,—the yoke, were inventions of the first society; and even now we scarce look on them, but that independent of all convention, the ideas of labor, penetration, ascension, and subjection, are presented to the mind;—for those are the instruments of these

effects: nature having indicated these ideas in the modulations of the voice, and instructed man in the application of them, could he in carrying into practice his desire, neglect the precepts of this all wise mistress, and omit to make use of determinate characters representing such instruments as should direct the intelligence of those amongst whom writing was to be a means of communication.

These reasons are more than sufficient to persuade us that the inventor of writing did not make use of arbitrary characters,—but that attending to the import of signs in relation to modulations, he applied to the representation of these, such instruments as by their use in society gave the most exact idea of their signification: if there are persons who are disposed to think otherwise, and that the first man was not acquainted with these simple and necessary operations of nature, I will ask them whether they can still deny the force of my opinion, and refuse the conviction of their own senses, when after an examination of the original characters on the monuments and coins of Spain, they shall see that the pickaxe, the hoe and the pitch fork are frequently found expressing the value of modulations; will they deny that there now exists, as I shall make manifest, an alphabet which preserves in the names of its characters the signification which nature has given to the modulations of the voice; and that from these figures applied according to the principles of the same alphabet, and peculiar to our primitive language, result beautiful conceptions in legends precisely appropriate to the purposes for which they were intended? I address my reasoning to those of the learned, who, disposed to seek truth in philosophy and history, are unshackled by preventional opinions which enslave the intellect;—a close examination of the elements of the Spanish alphabet convinces me that it is the same as was used by the first individuals of the human race;—for it is to be observed that the alphabets of all other known languages are composed of arbitrary characters in no wise indicating by their form the intention of nature as to the modulations which they represent;—herein is a total absence of those principles and that consummate wisdom which we observe that nature has manifested in all the first operations of mankind,—and in the mechanism of the Euscaran language.

antiqueness Superadded to these reasons,—there is in confirmation of my opinion as to the antiquity of the Celtiberian writing, the text of Strabo before referred to, proving that the Spaniards

had preserved laws and poems in verse of six thousand years date;* it is to be presumed that the earliest in date of these writings had been brought to Spain by the first settlers of the country, and it is to be inferred that the characters of them were the most ancient in the world. That the Celtiberian characters were brought to Spain by the first emigrants from the plains of Senaar, is a fact which in fair criticism does not admit of a doubt;—these characters of time immemorial,—are found in the Spanish inscriptions and on coins forming words in the basque language the most ancient in the world; (as will be shown hereafter)—they are not, nor have they the least affinity or resemblance to the Phœneecian characters; nor did the Phœneecians arrive in Spain till 800 years after its first settlement: they are not Grecian, for though the alphabet of that language has a considerable degree of connexion with ours, yet we do not find in it a similar explanation of the signification of its characters,—but on the contrary we see that they are wholly arbitrary;—besides, the Greeks date their alphabet only from the time of Cadmus who brought it to Greece, whereas the authority of Strabo above cited gives to our alphabet an anteriority of some centuries:—nor can it be believed by those who are acquainted with the Greeks and their inordinate love of fame, that Asclepiades, who lived many years in Andalusia and wrote on the antiquities of that country,—that Polibius,—Posidonius,—Artimidorus, Eforus, with many others who wrote on the affairs of Spain, and even Strabo himself who had before him the works of all these writers,—that all these would have left unnoticed a circumstance so important and so worthy of record, as the introduction of the Greek alphabet into the Peninsula, had such been the fact;—this is the less to be believed, since we find these same authors in defiance of all probabilities to the contrary of their relations, insisting on circumstances of infinitely less importance to the gratification of their national vanity,—such as the voyages of Ulysses and Antenor, of the companions of Teucer and Amphilocus, and stories of this kind, which even had they been authentic—had not thrown any extraordinary lustre on Greece;—so far are our characters from being Punic† that they have not more relation

*Note. Lib: 3. Hi inter Hispaniæ populos sapientia putantur excelere, et literarum studiis utuntur, et memorandæ vetustatis volumina habent, poemata; leges quoque versibus conscriptas è sex annorum millibus, ut aiunt.

†The Carthagenian language was a dialect of the Phœneecian—both of them derived from the Hebrew.

to them than they have to the Roman ; consequently having existed from the most remote antiquity, and not having been brought to Spain by any of the foreign tribes who have settled in it,—the Celtiberian must be that primitive alphabet which was brought by the first settlers,—and we find in it undoubted evidence of its derivation from the Euscaran language.

CHAPTER IV.

The Error of those who have expected to find in the Phœnician and Grecian Languages and Alphabets the Origin of the Alphabet and Idiom of Primitive Spain.

THE very little success which has attended the labors of the many learned men who have attempted to explain the most ancient inscriptions on the coins and other monuments of the peninsula,—has led them into the error of concluding that the primitive language of Spain was but a dialect of the Grecian or of the Phœnician ; or of both as some have supposed. It is surprising that men in other respects of profound erudition, should resort to conjectures of this nature, since it is evident that when those foreign tribes came to Spain the country had been peopled for many ages ; and therefore to support their professed opinion, it were necessary for these authors to assert that the population was dumb till the arrival of the Phœnecians and Greeks ;—absurd as is such an inference, yet it necessarily results from a rash theory which has been adopted merely to cover self-love and to avoid an ingenuous confession of ignorance.

Consequent on this error was that of attempting to find the Spanish characters in the Grecian and Phœnician alphabets, and in those languages the interpretation of the ancient inscriptions ; thus altogether losing the way which leads to the investigation of the truth ;—and this false conceit has not even yet been wholly dissipated by the disappointment of those who adopted it ;—the passage of Strabo is cited, where speaking of the Turtitans—he says that not only they, “ but all the Spaniards knew the use of letters, though not in the same form—*nor in*

the same language”—and from this it is pretended to infer that there never existed in Spain a peculiar and general language. Now I will concede for a moment in favor of this opinion the utmost that it can pretend to,—namely, that Strabo meant in this passage to speak of various and distinct languages in Spain, and not of the several dialects belonging to our native language ;—even in this supposition, it cannot be denied that Strabo wrote in the commencement of the reign of Tiberius, and that his observation refers to that epoch ; now who in correct logic can infer that because in the time of Strabo there existed many languages in Spain,—there might not have been, as there was in fact, a general language previous to the arrival of strangers. It is allowed that in his time there were many languages in Spain, Phœnecian, Grecian, Punic, and Roman, which last as he says was the prevailing one in Betica ;—but this fact does not in any wise exclude the other—namely, the existence of a primitive language general throughout the kingdom ;—the less, since it is evident as I think, that in the passage referred to, Strabo did in fact intend to speak of the various dialects of the primitive language, that which the basques now use, and not of the foreign languages with which he was well acquainted, but was aware that it was not necessary for him to refer to on that occasion :—and in fact the basque language is spoken in an extraordinary variety of beautiful dialects, amongst which are the Laburtanian,—the Guipuscoan, and the Biscayan ;—there are ten or twelve others, now confined to small districts, but which were spread over large tracts of country when the Euscaran was the general language of Spain ; they differed as well in the accentuation, as by a variety of inflexions ;—hence it were not surprising if even these same dialects had appeared to a stranger, as was Strabo, to be distinct languages,—especially if his opinion had been the result of a comparison between the three principal dialects, which so much vary from each other as to present some difficulty to a mutual understanding amongst the several basque provinces who use them :—I for example am from Andoain in Guipuzcoa, one of the districts in which the language is spoken in its greatest purity,—yet I confess that it is not without great difficulty that I can hold a conversation with a Laburtanian, or with an inhabitant of the Pyrennean Navarre.

It being then indisputable that Spain was peopled before the arrival of the Phœnecians, and that its inhabitants had a language peculiar to themselves, to suppose this primitive language

to be derived from the Phœnecian and Greek, is an unpardonable anachronism in any man having pretensions to literature ; consequently it is absurd to look into those languages for the interpretation of our inscriptions and medals.

The same diversity noticed by the Greeks in the languages, they observed also in the alphabets of the Peninsula ;—of these there were several in the time of Strabo ;—those used by the Carthaginians, the Phœnecians, and the Romans, as well as that of the Spaniards ; but this fact proves not anything against the single primitive alphabet which was the Celtiberian ;—all the others had been subsequently introduced,—this was primitive and peculiar to the country ; and though some varieties may be observed in it, these are in the merely accidental form of the characters resulting from the tastes or fashions of different epochs : thus our common letters now in use, are substantially the same as they were two centuries ago,—yet in many of our documents we find them so varied in their form as to appear quite different. The English, French, and Spanish, all use the same characters, yet several of these have great varieties in form, produced by the tastes of these different people ; so it has been with the Euscaran letters—and this I doubt not is the variety of which Strabo speaks.

Nevertheless it is necessary to mark well the distinction between the Spanish alphabet and those of the strangers, so as not to confound the characters of the one with the others. In the Peninsula are frequently found coins of all descriptions,—some Phœnecian, some Grecian, many Roman, and as many of those called Celtiberian, which are primitive Spanish. Now I do not undertake any explanation of these foreign coins, that labor does not enter into my plan ; I leave it to those of the learned who have a special knowledge of the alphabets and languages in question ;—I shall treat only of Spanish inscriptions, and the language and characters which form them ; I will expose a clear and literal explanation of these, and it will be seen that this discovery, so much desired, has not hitherto been made, owing to the prejudice as regards the basque language with which the investigations have been attempted ;—it has been supposed that nothing interesting to literature could be found amongst the rustic inhabitants of northern Spain, amongst those whom Strabo and Mariana, and others who are neither Strabos nor Marianas, call barbarous ; herein is the foundation of ignorance, and the argument of unjust prepossession. But nature produces its most perfect works in all places ; the

whole earth is, and always has been the object of the Creator's bounty. Let then this remote corner of Spain now afford to literature a discovery hitherto considered by the learned to be impossible.

CHAPTER V.

The Greek Alphabet is not of Phœnician but of Spanish Origin.

DON PABLO PEDRO DE ASTORLOA published last year (1802) his apology of the basque language, a work highly esteemed by the learned :—amongst much interesting matter which it contains, is the evidence that each of the letters of that language has a particular signification and representation conformable to the dictate of nature ;—hence results one of the most solid perfections of the Euscaran. The attentive consideration which I had given to this same matter left me without the least doubt of the same truth. I do not know but that my first impression was somewhat of regret, that another person had preceded me in the discovery, but at the same time I was rejoiced to find my opinion confirmed and supported by that of a learned basque, to whose zeal and well directed erudition the country was so highly indebted :—it is true that we had acquired the knowledge of this peculiarity in our language by different means, and in so far our discoveries were distinct ;—Astorloa had mounted to the first source, he had consulted nature, inferring from the articulations and the modulations of the voice, the representation which she had appropriated to each letter ;—whereas I began my investigations much lower, and found the signification of the letters in other speculations: a series of reflections on various etymologies in which I observed that the letters each exercised a special function, led me to an examination of the ancient alphabets with a view to discover some traces of the truth which I was in search of. Convinced by repeated proofs not only of the extension of the Euscaran in many parts of the world, but of the derivation from it of various languages, it appeared to me very possible to make

this quite evident, and after many efforts I found in the Hebrew and Greek alphabets the value and representation of the basque signs, thus at the same time ascertaining the origin of those alphabets, and settling an important point of history.*

The wisdom which the Euscaldunes manifested in this portion of literature, appears to have been almost beyond the power of human faculty ;—it was after the most profound consideration of nature,—and having found in the modulations of the voice the value and office of the smallest members of this philosophical language, that they determined on their alphabet, and thus perpetuated through successive generations that solid instruction which led to a perfect understanding of the idiom by means of a special denomination for each sign designating its true value, and in a form which (lest pronunciation in the course of time might destroy that value) should convey a sensible idea of the same signification ;—this is the alphabet called Celtiberian or ancient Spanish, and borrowed from us by the Greeks.†

I already see that this proposition will startle many a puny literary genius ;—I hear these exclaim, “ is it possible to tolerate such absurdity ; were there ever before such wild pretensions in the face of the most respectable authorities, and the uniform testimony of ancient history : ”—such clamors cannot diminish the force of those arguments by which I have the satisfaction to say that I shall make palpable, and completely demonstrate the truth. The proper mode of defeating my purpose, were to confute my arguments by solid reasoning ;—this, directed like my own to the discovery of truth, and being free from personalities, I should listen to with pleasure. I seek truth through the obscurity of remote ages with the sole object of establishing it, and thus restoring to my native language its rights which have been usurped ;—amongst them is the alpha-

*Eusebius in his “ *Evangelical Preparation*,” speaking of the Hebrew letters, observes, that they are the only letters which have significant names, and hence he infers that they are the most ancient ;—it is this same character in the basque, from which the Hebrew were derived, that leads Mr. Erro to a similar conclusion.

†Possibly there may appear to be some little obscurity in this passage ; if so, it will be best elucidated by an example. The modulation of the voice in pronouncing the 9th letter of the basque (which became the 10th in the Greek) alphabet, determined the value to be given to that letter ; that is to say, a certain modulation carried the sense of privation ; *kapa* then became the name of the letter to express its value, and in such a form, that is K, (or a yoke) as should convey a sensible idea of that value, according to the author’s explanation, (at the letter k.)

bet, which the Greeks have appropriated to themselves, giving the honor of its first invention to the Phœnecians.

I well know that all the ancient authors are of opinion that the Greeks took their alphabet from the Phœnecians, and I know that this is amongst the literati an established historical fact, of which no one can doubt without incurring the censure of temerity;—yet I must say in deference to truth, that though there are but few points in history so generally sanctioned as fact, there are few which are so false;—leaving this assertion to be established hereafter, we will in the mean time lay down five propositions.

1st. The Greek alphabet had originally but sixteen letters, the Phœnecian twenty-two.*

2d. The Grecian letters have not the least resemblance in their form to the Phœnecian. It is attempted to combat this serious difficulty by supposing that the difference in the form of the letters, was owing to the practice which the Greeks adopted of writing from the left towards the right hand, though originally they had written from the right towards the left; but this argument is of no weight, for allowing that change from the original practice, (which practice however was not without exceptions) the letters in that case were changed in their positions,—their angles turned towards the right hand instead of to the left as before, but they were not otherwise changed in their form.

3d. The ancient Grecian letters called Cadmean, are the very identical Celtiberian letters.

4th. The original number of the Greek letters is the same as the Celtiberian, and the names of them pure basque.

5th. The Phœnecians wrote from the right hand towards the left, the Greeks from the left to the right, as did the Celtiberians;—the argument that they formerly wrote in the other direction is of no force, for that practice was not general,—and if some monuments be found in which that method is noticed, so also in the basque writings the same variation is to be seen,—but of this I shall treat more fully hereafter. The very ancient Delphic inscription mentioned by Pliny† and in primitive Grecian characters as he says, still further supports my opinion.

These are ocular truths, and therefore incontrovertible; and they present on the first view vehement suspicion as to the

*Plin: lib: 8. cap:—56. Utique in Greciam intulisse é Phœnice cadmum sedecim numero.

†Plin. Lib. 8. cap. 58.

origin of the Greek alphabet. The sole foundation of the opinions of Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Pliny and others in favor of the Phœnecian origin, is that Cadmus, who lived in the fifteenth century, (before Christ) introduced an alphabet into Greece from Phœnecia, presuming that as he brought it from thence its characters must needs have belonged to the alphabet of that country. Cadmus was the son of Agenor king of the Phœnecians by Telephassa his wife ;—the Grecian historians tell us that Europa, the sister of Cadmus, having absented herself from the palace of Agenor under very suspicious circumstances, the anxiety produced by her departure resulted in the determination of the family that Cadmus should go in search of her through all the countries where she might probably have taken refuge ; that in this pursuit having traversed various territories without success,—fatigued by his labors, and having lost the greater part of his attendants, he feared to return to the presence of his father, and consulted the oracle of Delphos as to the course which he should pursue ;—he was answered that he should give up all thoughts of his country,—go to Bœotia in Greece, and build a city for himself and companions on the spot where he should find an ox. This story describes as a traveller a young prince, who under the necessity of seeking his sister, undertakes all the perils of navigation ; the advantages of a good education which he derived from his rank enables him to profit by his travels ; as it is evident that he did by his introducing an alphabet into Greece. At that period the voyage to Spain was continually made by the Phœnecians ;—the interesting accounts which the travellers gave of the manners and customs of the inhabitants of Betica,—of the beauty of the country, of its mines of gold and silver, and of other surprising particularities, must naturally have induced Cadmus to take that way, especially as he might reasonably suspect that his sister had fled thither, seeing that the constant commercial communication between the two countries afforded the readiest means of escape :—thus it is highly probable that Cadmus came to Spain, and that his cultivated mind profited of the opportunity to acquire information in whatever of importance was peculiar to that country ; an alphabet wholly new to him, and much more conformable to the system of nature than was his own, could not fail to excite his attention, and to engage him in an examination of its construction, and the signification of its characters. Having subsequently passed over to Greece in obedience to the order of the oracle, and founded the city

of Thebes in Bœotia, he there introduced the Spanish alphabet, which gradually spread and became general throughout Greece.

But supposing the account of these voyages of Cadmus and of his visit to Spain to be questionable,—yet it cannot be denied but that the Phœnecians made frequent voyages thither; on this point all histories are in accord :—a sagacious people so wholly addicted to commerce as were the Phœnecians, soon perceived the great advantages to be derived from an intercourse with Spain ;—they went in families and formed factories, so that in a few years there was established an intimate and constant communication between the two nations ; the gold of Spain excited the avarice of the Phœnecians, and a taste for the manufactures of the Phœnecians produced a corresponding commercial spirit in the Spaniards. The Phœnecians must necessarily have made themselves acquainted with the Spanish writings, for though they had not been led to this acquirement by their decided taste for the sciences, it became indispensable to their commercial pursuits ;—many Spaniards also passed over into Phœnecia : thus in this double intercourse the Spanish alphabet and language must have become known in that country. Is it to be supposed that a prince of a nation which valued itself on its superior civilization, should be ignorant in what related to the customs and the knowledge of a people with whom his own were in such constant and friendly communication, an intercourse to which Phœnecia was principally indebted for its wealth and power? I have always believed that he was not only well instructed on all these matters before he quitted Phœnecia, but that the rape of his sister was but a pretext for his voyage to Spain, and that having enriched himself there, he feared to return home, but, the more securely to enjoy what he had gained, passed over to Greece and founded his city, pretending an order of the oracle, at once to justify his absence from home, and to confirm his authority in his new colony.

To convince us that the Grecian alphabet is of Phœnecian origin, the ancient writers should have shewn at least that its characters, and the names of them, were Phœnecian ;—but this was too arduous a task :—unquestionably when one nation adopts the invention of another it commonly adopts at the same time the appellations belonging to that invention, and these undergo no other change than what results from the inflections of the voice peculiar to the nation so adopting. This general mode of receiving the names of adopted inventions, is that also which according to the general opinion prevailed in the origin of the

Greek alphabet ;—let us see then how it applies in the present argument, and examine without preoccupation the relation which the Phœnecian and Grecian alphabetic denominations may have to each other. If we observe a certain degree of conformity, yet we shall find such marked distinctions between them, as to convince us that the conformity is only in that degree which necessarily belongs to words having a common origin, as in fact these two alphabets have in the primitive language. Certain it is that the names of the signs of the two alphabets differ, though there is some analogy in the sound of them, and that the variation of the Greek from the Phœnecian names renders the Greek names purely basque, and exact definitions of the value which nature gave to the modulations which those signs represent ;—a very essential circumstance, and an extraordinary provision, which leaves not any room to suppose that the difference between the Phœnecian and Greek alphabet has resulted from accident as some persons have asserted. Those who would attribute the very marked difference which exists between the Grecian and Phœnecian signs to the peculiar genius of either language, must know that in this difference is not to be observed any dependence on the inflections proper to the Greek language ; the names of its letters have nothing in them of a Grecian character,—nothing of the genius of that idiom ; on the contrary, the strange names and inflections of the alphabet lead us to seek an explanation of the difference in question in some other principle, and not in the inflection of the Greek language ; will perchance this difference be accounted for by the alteration which all idioms undergo in the course of ages ;—but what reply can be made to the arguments in favor of a language now presented to the learned world as primitive, and laying claim to this very alphabet. It may be allowed that by extraordinary casualty a word here and there may be carried with some alteration from one language into another, but this is not applicable to the present case ; here we have sixteen signs of the primitive writing in which we observe that the Grecian deviation from the denominations of the Phœnecian letters, make pure basque. It is impossible to attribute to mere casualty a concurrence of multiplied and studied combinations ;—nor can we make dependent on a single circumstance this fact,—sixteen being the foreign and primitive letters of the Greeks, precisely the same number, sixteen of the twenty-four which now compose their alphabet, are basque ;—and though we should admit, (no trifling admission) that it was by

mere chance that the Greeks gave to those letters most appropriate names taken from the basque language, of which they were wholly ignorant, yet we cannot go so far as to allow a possibility that it was also by mere chance that they chose for the names of their letters precise definitions of the value which nature gave to them. And apart from all these incongruities, is there any one who can believe that the Greeks, finding the want of an alphabet, took the letters of it from the Phœnecians, and the names of those letters from the basques? Now it is a fact that the characters which the most eminent paleographers present to us as Cadmean and primitive Grecian, are identically the same as the basque language recognizes in inscriptions on coins and stones of the first ages after the peopling of Spain; those signs are in no wise Phœnecian, nor have they ever belonged to any language other than the basque, for in that language only can be found their representative character, and the determinate value of their modulations; for the same reason it is certain that they were not borrowed by the Euscaldunes from any other people.

Against all these facts and arguments how is it possible yet to seek in the Phœnecian for the origin of the Greek alphabet,—on no better ground than some analogy in the sound, or the authority of a Grecian writer in an epoch many ages posterior to that origin;—authority is the last argument of philosophy in matters of opinion, especially where, as in the present case, the channel through which it is transmitted is of a questionable character.

An adversary of Bernardo de Montfaucon in a pamphlet entitled "*Priscis Græcorum et Latinorum literis*," felt the force of these arguments; his observations and researches proved to him that the Greek alphabet had no relation to the Phœnecian language; but like one who satisfies himself without solid foundations, and on incomplete examination, he attributes to Cadmus the invention of the Zeta, Theta, and Xi, asserting that their forms and appellations denote their Phœnecian origin; and as to sixteen primitive letters he decides that they are Pelasgian: if this author had rested satisfied with proving that these were not Phœnecian, his opinions would have had more value;—but the attempt to make the three letters above mentioned Phœnecian, whereas the two first of them have most apt significations in the Euscaran,—and then asserting that the Greek alphabet is Pelasgian,* without telling us what is this Pelasgian language, and

* Pelasgian—All the ancient tribes of Greece were known by the name of Pelasgi as long as they were migrant or vagabond—or Πτερυγοί—storks,

what signification the Grecian characters have in that language ; this as it appears to me proceeds from the desire of obtaining reputation at the risk of treating on a matter which he does not understand.

But to return to my purpose, I say not only that the Grecian and basque letters are the same, but that the signification of them is to be found in the basque language only, and that they have no further relation or resemblance to those of the Phœnecian or Hebrew alphabet, than what arises from their common origin in the Euscaran.

CHAPTER VI.

The Demonstration that the Greek Alphabet is derived from the Basque.

SOME persons have considered, and still consider as paradoxical, the assertion that each letter in the basque language has its special signification and representation ; according to this theory, say they, all languages may be explained in basque ; but this mode of talking is deficient in philosophy. It is true that the words of all languages are composed of small members or letters, but it is not equally so, (even though these members may have each its special signification furnished by nature,) that in the formation of those languages, the rule thus afforded has been adopted and observed with that scrupulous nicety which distinguished the basque ; hence it is that in other languages the signification of the members of a word conjunctively rarely correspond to the sense in which the word is used, or is an exact definition of the thing represented by it : I say *rarely* for it is certain that amongst the languages of the confusion*, all of which were derived immediately from the Euscaran, are to be found some words having that property, and these have been taken from our language.

a species of bird that often changes its residence—so that the author here combated by Mr Erro merely hazards the assertion, that *civilized* Greece had the alphabet of their *barbarous* ancestors.

* “ Confusion” of languages, refers to the story of the tower of Babel.

The very decisive examples from our alphabet which I shall now expose, will not only satisfy and silence forever all doubts, but establish the fact hitherto unknown, that the Greek alphabet is basque—or primitive Spanish.

A

The first letter in the Greek alphabet is the *a*, which they call *alpha*, this being its name in the language from which it was taken ;—amongst the Greeks this word *alpha* has no sort of signification, it says nothing ; but amongst the Euscarans it is an exact definition of its value, and is what nature intended it to represent : it may have two significations according to two distinct etymologies, but both quite appropriate to its representation :—the first signification is a letter *powerful, robust, strong*, from *ala*, power,—and *fa* or *ba* (which are the same as we soon shall see) meaning *profound extension* ; these dictions united, say literally *of power the profound extension*, or which is the same, *very powerful*, and in truth the A is the most powerful of all the modulations, that by which a man gives most force to his voice. The second signification is a letter which denotes *extension, dilatation*, from *ar*, *ara*, any thing plain, or extended, and the termination *ba* : the Euscaran language makes frequent use of the letter in this last sense ; the substitution of the *r* soft, for *l* is very common in our language, as for example in the words *Alaba* for *Araba*, *Galpe* for *Garpe*, *Galatia* for *Garatia* ; and on the contrary of the soft *r* for *l*—thus we say indifferently *ulia* or *uria*, *ilia* or *iria*, to signify a people or country.

B.

The second letter in the Greek alphabet is B,—which they call *beta* ; the etymology of this word is so apt, and so common its representation, that there is not a basque who does not on the slightest consideration claim it as his own ; it is composed of *be*—*bea*—something profound, low,—and of the local termination *eta* ; thus this letter in the Euscaran always denotes profundity. Our ancestors to represent this modulation and give an idea of its value, have left to us a sign, which has been subsequently used reversed ; (see the plate,)—it represents a weight suspended to a cord, and what figure could be invented to give us an idea of profundity more proper than that of the instrument by which it is measured ; is it possible that any one who sees this should assert that the Greek beta is not basque ? The ancient basques represented by the same sign

the modulations b, f, p, and this is the reason why the signification of a basque word transferred into a foreign alphabet, is the same whichever of these letters it may be written with, for they have the same representation; and though the Euscaran oral language makes some distinction between them, yet our ancestors to avoid confusion, established the rule of writing them by the same sign, seeing that the value of them was nearly equal, and consequently the use of them nearly indifferent; thus we say indiscriminately, the native of *Nabara*, of *Napara*, or of *Nafara*.

G.

The third letter is the G, which the Greeks call *gamma*, and this is also the third sign of the primitive alphabet; the name is pure basque, and is composed of *gam*, *gama*, which signifies that which is *above*, *high*, as in the words, *gam-bara*, *gamba-ta*, and of *mi*, *mia*, *narrow*; thus the sign *g* in the basque always signifies height and narrowness. The inventor of the art of writing appropriated to represent this sign the very apt figure of a small ladder, (see the plate.) Nothing could give a better idea of the modulation than that instrument by which we ascend. The Euscarans yet preserve in their oral alphabet the letter *q*, as in the words *mesquiriz*, *amezquita*, &c. but to represent this sound in writing, they use the letters *gamma* and *kapa*; it is therefore that I mention the *q* in this place, it was a sign unknown to the ancient basques, but introduced by the Romans in later ages, and without the least necessity.

D.

The fourth letter of the Greek is also the fourth sign of the primitive alphabet, and called *delta* or *deleta*; the modulation *d*, in the syllabical composition of Euscaran words, denotes multitude. The word is composed of *de*, *de-a*, or *dia*, which signifies multitude, of *le*, *lea*, maker, causer, or former; and of the local* termination *eta*, which together make of *multitude the*

* *Local* termination. It is very common in the basque language to terminate words referring to *place* with *eta*;—it may be well here to explain other similar expressions used by the author;—*augmentative* letter, means that the letter *m*, added to a word, always expresses augmentation in the basque—in the same way *abundantial* letter means that *u* is the sign of abundance; *characteristic of appellative* means that *a* is an article appellative;—*a* and *ac* are very common terminations of nouns in the basque language, it is therefore that so many places in the French Pyrennes, and what is called the department of the Gironde (capital of which is Bordeaux) have names ending with *ac*,—these terminations are but the postposition of the appellative article; for example, *guizon* is *man*, and *guizonac*, *the man*.

former ; that is to say, the letter which has the power and representation of multitude. This is the definition and value of the modulation, and herein we see the reason why the territory laying between the mouths of the Nile has been called the Delta from the first ages of the world ; it has not been so called as has hitherto been generally supposed, on account of its form, similar to the delta in the Greek alphabet, but on account of its very extraordinary fertility and the abundance of its products, as though we should say, country *maker of multitudes and abundance*.

There is such a close affinity between this modulation, and that of the *t*, that in the common use of the basque language, we frequently take one for the other ; so our ancestors used probably a common figure to represent them, for after much investigation I have not been able to discover amongst any of the monuments which I have examined, any special sign for the *d*.

E.

The fifth letter of the Greek alphabet is also the fifth sign of the basque ; as the Greeks never had in their language the pronunciation *tsi*, they never could receive the name *etsila*, by which the Basques called the *e*. The word *etsila* means that the vowel *e* denotes debility, extenuation, &c. It is composed of *etsi*, to consent—and *ila*, a thing dead ; that is, it is a sign which represents the modulation *almost dead* of the vowel *e*.

It denotes weakness, both in a moral and physical sense ; when used in the sense of debility, the Basques represented it by an angle of unequal sides with its point on the ground, (see the plate,) manifesting in the weight of its long sides and the smallness of its base, the danger of its losing its equilibrium and falling. The Greeks substituted the *psi*, for the *tsi*, and so made of the basque *etsila*, *epsila*, or *epsilon*, by means of the Greek termination *on*.*

C or Z.

The sixth letter of the Grecian is also the sixth of the primitive alphabet, our modern *c*, which they call *zeta*. This basque

* The author here observes in a note, that the name of this letter, more changed than any other in the alphabet by the Greek inflexion, may also have been derived from the primitive *Aitz-ila*, which the Greeks read *Eitz-ila*, and which signifies *letter quite dead*—that is, very weak letter. Be this as it may, the signification is the same, and explains that which nature gave to its modulation in the composition of the language.

word signifies *a cutting letter*, and is composed of *ce, cea*, cut—and the local termination *eta* ; this is the signification which nature gave to the modulation which this letter represents, and is that which the basque language adopted in the composition of its words. Our ancestors gave the most lively representation of its value by two signs, [see the plate.] The first figure is that of a pruning knife, the second represents the semicircle which the teeth form, and with which in pronouncing the *c*, we seem as though we should cut the tongue.

This modulation has also a representation in a double letter, and then it signifies abundance ; our ancestors when they employed it in this sense, doubled the sign and formed of it several others, as [see the plate.] The letter has two pronunciations, one like the *cha*, in Spanish, and one like the soft *cha*, in the French language ; though they were both expressed in writing by the same sign, they were differently pronounced by the reader, as in *Zacurra*, a great dog, which name though always written with a *Z*, yet when applied to a small dog, was read and pronounced *chacurra*. In some other words these pronunciations were indifferently at the choice of the reader, as in *Zingara* or *chingara*, a spark—*Zimista* or *chimista*, the lightning ; this same variation in the pronunciation is still in use.

T.

The eighth letter of the Grecian, is the seventh sign of the basque alphabet, called *tita*, (*theta*.) This name indicates the value which nature affixed to the modulation *t* ; the word *tita* is pure basque, and signifies a thing very abundant at times, but not continually so ; it is composed of the termination *ti, tia*, which signifies abundance limited to certain times, as in *sagastia*, the orchard, where every year, though not throughout the whole year, there is abundance of apples ; and in *arritia*, a space of land, not a quarry, but on which here and there is a great abundance of stones ; for the same reason this termination *ti-ta* or *ti-tia* is the name given to the breast of a woman *when nursing* ; in truth it were impossible to present a more perfect idea of the value of the modulation *t*, than by this name ; there is nothing which can better represent this occasional abundance, than the breast of a woman provided with nourishment by nature herself, during the period of her nursing. The inventor of the art of writing was not less judicious in the choice of the sign which represents this letter, than in the name given to it,—the figure is that of a woman's breast. [See plate.]

J.

The Greeks gave to the ninth letter of their alphabet the same name as our ancestors gave to the eighth sign of theirs, that is *iota*. This sign had originally two significations, and still preserves in the basque two different pronunciations; one as *i*, and the other as *j*. The Greeks, who never comprehended the true nature of this difference, took the sign in only one acceptance, and it is therefore that their alphabet is without the *i* proper; for as to their *upsilon*, it is and always has been an *u*; if it has been taken for our *i* this is not because the primitive Spaniards did not make a distinction between the two signs, but because in a great number of our words they are used indiscriminately, which led to the belief that the Spaniards had no special sign for the third vowel, and that the sign of the *u* was employed sometimes as one representation and sometimes for the other: what may also very much have contributed to this error, was the carelessness of our writers, who forgetful of the wise principles which governed the composition of the alphabet, gave into a loose practice of using indiscriminately the *i* and the *u*, between which in the origin there was a well marked distinction; this abusive custom transferred to Greece with our alphabet, hence arose the difficulty of ascertaining the true value of their *upsilon*, whether it was that of *i* or *u*.

To the letter *i* under the modulations, *Ya, Ye, Ia, Io*, our ancestors gave the name of *iota* to designate the signification affixed to them by nature; it denotes the functions of the *j* to be the expression of a shock, stroke, power, superiority, and other synonymes of these,—it being composed of the verb *io* to strike, attack, rise, elevate, and of the local termination *eta*.

When this letter had the modulation of a vowel, the basques called it *i* or *ia*, to express its functions in the composition of language; it denotes whatever is sharp, pointed, subtle, fine, and is called *i*—that is a *rush*—which plant thin and pointed represents the value of this vowel. (See the plate.)

K.

The tenth letter of the Grecian alphabet is the ninth of the basque, it is the Castillian *k*, called in Greek *kapa*; as the Euscarans did not use for the representation of the B, P, F, more than the single sign of B, it is therefore that amongst the nations which have taken from them the names of the letters of the alphabet, some have called this letter *kaf* or *kafa* as the Jews, others *kapa* as the Greeks, and the Euscarans called it *kaba*. This variety does not affect its signification; it always

denotes privation, great want, defect, contempt; *kaba* is softened into *gaba*, so we call the night because it deprives us of light and of the sight of objects; *gaba* is a contraction of *gabea* a negative expression equivalent to "without," as *donegabea*, without goodness, that is *bad*.

The inventor of the art of writing to represent this letter, gave us the figure of a yoke or collar in two different positions, (see the plate,) and could any thing be imagined better suited to convey the idea of a great want or privation than that of the instrument invented by man to deprive of his liberty and reduce to servitude an animal made free by nature. Very shortly after the creation of man it became necessary for him to resort to the assistance of the brute animals for the cultivation of the earth, but to this end it was necessary to reduce to obedience animals whose strongest instinct was perfect independence. It is to be presumed that his first experiments were made on single animals, whether the horse, or horned animal, and it was not till after he had succeeded with one, that he thought of yoking pairs; thus we see that the yoke here represented is for a single neck; the invention of writing then was anterior to the use of the double yoke; hence another argument in favor of the very high antiquity of this art.

L.

The eleventh letter of the Grecian is the tenth sign of the primitive alphabet, called *Lambda* or *Lameda*, corresponding to the Castillian *L*; this is a basque word denoting precisely the value which nature gave to the modulation *l*, and that which it has in the Euscaran language; it is composed of *la*, a thing benumbed, adherent; of the augmentative letter *m*, and of *edu*, a thing extended; thus this letter denotes torpor, fatigue, immobility; our ancestors to represent this modulation gave to it the very appropriate sign of a hoe, (see the plate,) for there is not any thing which fatigues a man more than labor, and in the first ages of the world when the alphabet was invented, there was no other labor than agriculture; hence this sign was the most appropriate, and is another proof of the very high antiquity of the basque writing. The double *L*, (*ll*) which is very common in the oral alphabet of the basque language, has not any special sign to represent it, for it is a modulation so little necessary that it is wholly wanting in several dialects, as in those of Laburtania and the Pyrenean Navarre; the *i* before or after the *l* gives to us precisely the value of the *ll*—thus in one dialect

illetza, abundance of wool, is *ilietza* in another; *oilua*, a hen, in one dialect, is *ollua* in the other.

M.

The twelfth letter of the Greek alphabet and the eleventh of the basque, is called *mi*, equivalent to our *m*: *mi* or *mia* signifies tender, flexible, delicate, and by metaphor the tongue; as it is by the tongue that we give utterance and extension to our ideas, hence the modulation *m*, is called tongue, according to the signification which nature gave to it in our idiom,—that is the augmenting property. Our ancestors gave to this modulation for a sign, the form of the lips when the mouth is suddenly closed, that being the natural position of them when this letter is pronounced. (See the plate.)

N.

The thirteenth letter of the Greek, which is the twelfth of the primitive alphabet, corresponds to our common *n*; *ni* in the basque signifies ascent rising in a point, as is seen in the words *muniaín*, *ernio*, *ernani*, &c. ; it also denotes suavity, softness, and therefore when we caress infants we say *ninia*, *ninichua*, and we even make a distinction with this letter in our manner of addressing men and women, thus we say *toma* with a harsh *t*, to the man, and to the woman *noma* with the soft *n*. The sign originally appropriated to this modulation was a crook, which was afterwards changed by making its bends angular—but both signs are found indiscriminately employed in the basque language. (See the plate.)

Shortly after the creation of man he found himself obliged to seek subsistence for himself and companion; this necessity, and the desire of seeing and examining closely the distant objects of his attention and admiration, induced him to make long and wearisome and frequent excursions from his habitation; it was in climbing the mountains that he could best observe all the beauties of nature spread before him, he must have soon found the assistance which he might derive from a staff; the first form of this may have been simple, but he must have quickly perceived the advantages of a crook, as well to assist him in his ascent, as to draw within the reach of his hands the branches of trees producing fruits for his nourishment: the consonant N being intended by nature to represent an ascent, or gentle mounting of a hill, as is observed in the composition of the basque idiom, hence the inventor of writing very properly applied as the best sign of its value a crook, which had its origin from the fatigue

which man experienced principally in ascending mountains. To this sign also belongs the *n* (n liquid) which is very common in the oral alphabet of our language ; our ancestors did not employ any special sign to represent this modulation, nor was it necessary to do so; like the double *l*, there are several of our dialects in which it is scarcely used ; the vowel *i* either preceding or following *n*, makes the exact effect of *n* (n liquid) in the dialects wherein it is used—thus *oina* for *ona*, *gania* or *gaina* for *gana*. These observations on the double *l* and liquid *n*, and the oriental character which prevails in the dialects of Laburtaña, and the Pyrenean Navarre, by its many aspirations, lead me to believe that dialect to have been the oldest in our language, or at least that which was most generally used in the primitive world when the alphabet was formed.

R.

The Greeks call the seventeenth letter of their alphabet *Ro*, and this is the thirteenth sign in the primitive, corresponding to our Castillian *r*, (rough.) Though the basque write *Ro*, they pronounce it with the antiposition of the soft *e*, for the purpose of rendering the *r* less harsh at the commencement of a word ; so they pronounce *erro* the root (foot) of a mountain, distinguished from *sustraria* which signifies any vegetable root whatever ; as the foot of a mountain is generally rough or uneven ground, it is therefore that the Euscarans gave to the modulation *r* which is naturally so harsh in the pronunciation, the name of *ro* or *erro*, to denote whatever was rough, harsh and painful ; and in this sense it is employed in the Euscaran. This etymology does not admit of a doubt ; it is evident in the rugged situation of the ancient palace of Cabo de Armeria de Erro, the seat of my family, and in the valley of Erro, formed by the steep, craggy sides of the Pyrennes. The sign which represents this modulation is a knife or dagger,—the use of this instrument to separate any thing into pieces or to transfix, indicates the roughness of this letter ; amongst other signs this letter has also that of an axe, which from the roughness of its stroke is quite significative. The Euscarans had a particular sign to represent the double *r*, which is no other than two of the single *r*'s joined back to back, the middle line being in common ; sometimes also it is formed in the same way, but the single line left out. (See the plate.)

S.

The eighteenth letter of the Grecian is the fourteenth sign of the Euscaran alphabet, called *sugma*, and corresponds to our

Castillian *s*; this basque name is composed of the basque word *suga*, a snake, and *me*, *mea*, flexible, fine, subtile; that is to say, the modulation *s* received from nature for the composition of the idiom the representation of the properties of this reptile, and it therefore denotes, pressing, rubbing, dragging, and any thing flexible, subtile; the inventor of writing therefore gave us to represent this consonant the figure of a snake, (see the plate,) and thus we find it employed in our basque inscriptions, and amongst the signs of the original Greek alphabet.

U.

The twentieth letter of the Greek alphabet is the fifteenth sign of the basque, corresponding to our Castillian *u*. I have already observed that the Greeks had not our pronunciation *ts*, and therefore not being able to pronounce this sign as the basque *utsilun*, they substituted their pronunciation *ps* as most nearly approaching it, and called the letter *upsilon*; since the Greeks had not the pronunciation *ts*, nor had the basques the pronunciation *ps*, this variation, though slight, was indispensable in adopting a name so expressive of the value of its sign.

Utsilun, signifies that the vowel *u* denotes void, obscure hollowness; that is, profound hollowness, for the depth of cavities renders them obscure: the word is composed of *uts*—*utsa*, void or cavity, and *ilun*—*iluna*, obscure: as the Euscarans frequently substituted the *u* for the *i*, (and this practice is still continued) as in *ulcea*, a nail, for *ilcea*, *uria*, the people, for *iria*, and on the contrary the *i* for the *u*, as in *Jaincoa* for *Jaungoicoa*, &c., thence, as before observed, the Greeks suppose that this sign *utsilun*, represented both the *u* and the *i*.

The inventor of the alphabet left us two signs to represent the value of the modulation *u*, both admirably adapted to it;—the first, that of a pitch fork of three prongs, an instrument of agriculture used to make hollows* in the cocks of hay; the second, is that of another species of fork, two pronged, used in a similar way for corn in stacks, or in the barn. (See the plate.) Thus is made evident, by the form of the last sign, the error which has hitherto prevailed, that the *y* was invented by the Greeks; it is undoubtedly the *u* Spanish, or more properly speaking, oriental, brought to Spain and taken from thence by the Greeks. Even though this fact were not established as it

*“To make hollows,” that is, so as not to leave it in compact masses; but admitting the air to circulate, and thus preventing the hay from rotting by moisture.

is, by the peculiar adaptation of the sign to its purpose, a conclusive argument in its favor exists in a sepulchral stone at Iglesuela in Arragon, the legend on which is in the basque language and characters; and there the *y* is employed even in the value of *i*.

O.

The twenty fourth, and last letter of the Greek alphabet, called *omega*, is the sixteenth sign of the Euscaran, and corresponds to the Castillian *o*. *Omega* is a basque word, signifying a rough though round height, and is composed of *o*, *oa*, high, round; of *me*, *mea*, any thing soft or delicate, and of the negative *ga*—(corresponding to our *without*)—these, taken together, signify that the letter *o* denotes any thing high, round and rough, or little smooth; the sign which represents this letter under those qualities, is one the angles of which represent the roughness of the modulation, as the smoothness and regularity of this other sign, *o*, conveys the idea of a smooth elevation. [See the plate.]

CHAPTER VII.

Application of the Preceding Observations.

THESE are the sixteen letters of the original Greek alphabet, taken from the sixteen signs of the Euscaran; carried to Greece, and forgotten in Spain, they have remained for ages unknown to their legitimate proprietors. This is the wisely constructed alphabet of our ancestors, that composition of extraordinary genius, transferring to the names of the signs, the observations made on the value which nature gave to the modulations of the voice. Let this demonstration be well examined by the learned, and let them then pronounce whether it be possible still to maintain the historical dogma as an infallible truth, that the Greek alphabet is of Phœnecian origin.

This discovery throws light on languages in general, to what perfection may not several of them be brought, if in the formation of their words, the same rule of nature be observed as the

inventors of the art of writing have applied to the smallest members of words in the signs of our alphabet?

The discordance which is to be observed in historical narratives as to the Greek alphabet is of itself a sufficient evidence, that the writers of that nation deserve but little confidence in what they say as to the number of the letters which have been added to that alphabet; and as to the authors of the invention.

Nor is it surprising that a nation ignorant as to the origin of its alphabet, should also be ignorant as to which were the primitive letters of it, and which those which were subsequently added; particularly if the additions were made, as it is probable that they were, soon after the original alphabet was carried to Greece. Relative to the first additions made, authors are totally at variance, some attributing them to Palamedes and some to Epicarmus. The Greeks, always seeking to assume as their own, the honor belonging to other nations, did not fail to appropriate to themselves some part at least, of the credit of this invention, and as they could not deny the foreign origin of their primitive letters, they desired at least to claim the merit of the additions; but being wholly ignorant of the idiom to which the names of their letters belonged, without a knowledge of which an accurate distinction between the original and added letters was impossible, they fell into confusion—mistaking sometimes the primitive for the added, and at others the added for the primitive. Thus Aristotle enumerating the sixteen primitive letters, places amongst them *pi*, *tau* and *fi*, which are in fact added letters, and have not any relation to the primitive alphabet, which has no special signs to represent them, they being included in the signs beta and tita. Amongst the four letters of the first addition made by Palamedes or Epicarmus, is placed the *tita*, and in the second addition, attributed to Simonides, the *zeta* and *omega*; but I have made it perfectly evident that these signs are of the basque alphabet, of course they are not of the added letters, and much less of Grecian invention; for as the primitive alphabet was much anterior to Palamedes, Epicarmus and Simonides, and as the names of these signs are basque, and exact definitions of the value of the modulations which they represent, those names cannot have been given by the Greeks, who were always ignorant of the basque idiom; besides, had the invention of the signs been theirs, they had probably given to them Grecian and not foreign appellations.

The original letters then of the Greek alphabet, represented by sixteen signs of the Euscaran, were these—A, B, G, D, E, Z, T, J, K, L, M, N, R, S, U, O—comprehending the value of the twenty eight letters of the basque *oral* alphabet;* that is of twenty four common letters, and the n (liquid), ll (double l,) tza, and tsa. The letters added to the Greek alphabet were eight, viz : xi, little o, (omicron) *pi*, *tau*, *fi*, *chi*, *psi*, and *h* (eta)—though these may be called unions rather than additions, since they are but signs comprehending each the pronunciation of two or more of the original letters. But putting aside the discussion as to the epoch when these additions were made, a point of no great importance, it is to be observed that the signs which represent these additions are wholly Euscaran ; the χ (xi) corresponds to one of the signs of our Z, composed as a double letter of two c's—the omicron is the basque *o* in one of its significations—the *pi* corresponds to one of the signs of the gamma, the *tau* to one of those which represent the *tita*, the *fi* to one of the signs which represent the beta—the *chi* is but the sound of the kapa in this sign χ , which is one of those representing the Z, and the *psi* is one of the signs of the utsalun and of the iota.†

These observations may serve to undeceive those who have been disposed to receive historical dogmas from Grecian writers, and to submit to such frail authority the operations of reason and the instruction of their own intellects.

**Twenty four common letters* of the basque oral alphabet. This requires explanation ; it means that the sixteen written letters as *now used* in conversation, are made to comprehend the expression of the twenty four Castilian—called “common letters.”

†The author has omitted the *H*, (eta) which is evidently one of the signs of the basque Etsila.

The primitive alphabet & the correspondence between the basque signs as they are found on the most ancient monuments of Spain & the common letters.

<i>Common Letters.</i>	<i>Names of the Greek Letters</i>	<i>Names of the primitive Basque Signs</i>	<i>Signs of the Primitive</i>	<i>Variations of the signs subsequently introduced.</i>
A	<i>Alfa.</i>	<i>Alfa.</i>	Λ.	H. Δ. Π. X. A.
BFP.	<i>Beta</i>	<i>Beta</i>	⏚.	Φ. Θ. ⊗. ⊞. ⊠. ⊡. ⊢. ∞. (1)
G.	<i>Gamma</i>	<i>Gamma</i>	⊞.	Γ. P. J. A.
D	<i>Delta</i>	<i>Delta & deleta</i>		
E	<i>Epsilon</i>	<i>Etrila</i>	∨. 11.	H. M. 11. H. A.
C ó Z	<i>Zeta</i>	<i>Zeta</i>	ζ. C.	< . 4. √. X. 8. & . A. ∞. X.
T	<i>Tita</i>	<i>Tita</i>	⊙.	◇. ◇. T. O.
J I	<i>Iota</i>	<i>I. Iota</i>	1. ↑.	1. 2 Y. 4. 4. 4. 4. 4.
K	<i>Kapa</i>	<i>Kapa</i>	k.	E.
L	<i>Lamda</i>	<i>Lameda</i>	Γ.	< < A. A.
M	<i>Mi</i>	<i>Mi</i>	~.	M.
N	<i>Ni</i>	<i>Ni</i>	β.	π. A'. A'. A.
R	<i>Ro</i>	<i>Ro</i>	Α. Ρ. Ρ.	P. P. D. D. 8. 8.
S	<i>Sigma</i>	<i>Sigma</i>	3.	4. 5.
U	<i>Upsilon</i>	<i>Utsilun</i>	4. Y.	4. 1 4. 4.
O	<i>Omega</i>	<i>Omega</i>	◇. O.	



PART II.

CHAPTER I.

On the Attempts of some Learned Men to discover the Primitive Language; and on the singular Character and Perfection of that Language.

I UNDERTAKE a work, the argument of which traversing the obscurity of ages wholly unknown to history, establishes the origin of the religion, language, and scientific opinions of men in the first periods of the creation. The comparative recent date of all records, the fables of all nations, and the darkness which envelopes the formation of societies after the dispersion, would appear to be insuperable obstacles to my success. The works of Zoroaster, Berosus, Enos, Sanconiaton, and others, cited as the most ancient, have against their claim to authenticity strong presumptions rendering them inadmissible as authorities. The relations of the sacred historian Moses, limited to the principal purpose of his mission, leave great voids for research, and do not afford to my investigation those aids which might otherwise be derived from the faith to which such a highly gifted writer is entitled.*

*As the author every where speaks of Moses in terms of orthodox respect, he is entitled in this place to notice the insufficiency or incompleteness of his historical relation, a reserve which cannot be censured even by Jews. Some christian philosophers considering that Moses was the leader of an ignorant and credulous people, have not hesitated to view him rather as a wise politician than an inspired legislator and historian; one of these, treating of the hebdominal feasts of the Jews which he shows to have been regulated by an ancient apocalyptical system, charges Moses with having studiously concealed the origin of them: "Le Sabat-etoit selon les apparences *antérieur* a ce législateur"—he adds, in conclusion, "Le bible ne suffit point pour connoître les juifs leur *fables* prouvent leur antiquité—autant que leur histoire.

Nevertheless these apparently insurmountable difficulties are to be overcome by a judicious and philosophical criticism; nor is there probably an argument better supported by undeniable documents, than this which many of the learned have qualified as untenable: some of them however, have in defiance of all discouragement, endeavored to discover events previous to the epochs of history, and to examine the origin of societies and languages in the first ages of the world: convinced that no light could be derived from the histories of even the most ancient people on account of the monstrous fables with which they are disfigured, and the propensity to the marvellous which characterized the Ægyptians as well as the Greeks, they have resorted to the examination of idioms, which are living archives, carrying in the very construction of their words, important information as to the state of intellectual cultivation in those times which are beyond the reach of examination by any other means. The theories which have been formed in pursuit of this object have been various; some have supposed that the primitive language was an element in the constitution of man, belonging necessarily to the faculty of speech by which he is distinguished; so far this was philosophic; but not so the method taken by Psameticus king of Ægypt (according to Herodotus) to discover this primitive language in two children brought up in a forest and kept from all human intercourse. The common pretension of finding the man of nature in a savage state, is founded upon very erroneous ideas of nature;* it is like looking for the perfection of fruit on the trees of the forest, to conclude that savages the furthest removed from civilization, living in disorder, and without any control of their passions, are most approximate to the system of nature. Though it is quite evident that man cannot live alone, that

*A philosophical view of the Deluge adds force to this opinion of Mr Erro. It may be reasonably presumed, I think, that the "*savage state*" did not exist before, but was the natural result of that great calamity. It is probable that the destruction produced by that commotion of nature was more complete in some places than in others, and the effects of it therefore as well on the social character of the inhabitants of the earth as on the earth itself, has been more or less durable in the same degree, and hence, that the savage state which we are pleased to call a "*state of nature*," still exists in many parts of the world. Or though it is certain that the whole earth has been deluged, it is possible that there has never been one *universal* deluge; but that portions only of the earth have been inundated, at different epochs: or finally this still existing "*savage state*" may be attributed to the dispersion, by those who believe in the story of Babel; and to this hypothesis, the reasoning of the author (in the 3d chapter) to show how the *precepts* of the primitive idiom were lost is in part applicable.

there is a chain of necessities belonging to his very constitution which teach him that he was created for society ; yet there are some persons who would persuade us that the more he advances in this natural order, the further he advances towards a state of imperfection and degradation !

Man is intended by nature to be a social animal, he is endowed with all the faculties necessary to the perfection of this plan ; those faculties had not been given to him had the Creator intended him for the savage state : the more then the cultivation of his intellect and the civilization of his habits, the more is he the man of nature. The language which two children abandoned in a forest would form, would not be the idiom of nature, it would scarcely be a rational language, it would be an idiom of interjections, to express the animal wants. Quintilian relating a similar experiment of children left in a desert, tells us that though they could articulate some words they were without the faculty of speech.*

Other philosophers, on the supposition that the primitive language may yet be a living language, have directed their inquiries to certain existing idioms with the hope of discovering innate proofs of their originalness ; and though some of these learned men have obstinately persisted in endeavors to support their systems by violating all laws of etymology, others more reasonable, having brought down their discoveries to certain epochs where all further light has been wanting, have prudently abandoned the object. Others again, and at their head the great Plato, have assumed as the basis of their speculations principles more general and philosophic ; observing that the construction of language is not a work of caprice, but that it is the result of a certain disposition of the organs of speech, and of the mechanism of the voice applied by the imperious power of nature to the representation of the qualities of objects, they sought in all languages for some common and general elementary characters, and then by tracing the derivations of one from the other, they expected to find the primitive language by the modulations of the voice in what they have conceived to be rudiments. These philosophers approached the true method, and if they had confined themselves to the examination of nature in fixing the exact value belonging to each modulation of the voice, they had doubtless arrived at some satisfactory results. This

*Quint : Lib. x, ch. 1. Infantes a mutuis nutricibus jussu regum in solitudine educati, etiam si verba quædam emisisse traduntur tamen loquendi facultate caruerunt, (that is to say, of *expressing thoughts*.)

great advance towards the discovery of the primitive language, afforded hopes of final success, but philosophy has not made any progress in perfectionating and consolidating the important though imperfect notions announced by Plato; neither Publius Nigidius and the ancient grammarians, nor our modern philosophers, have done more than adopt and generalize his principles, so that it may be safely asserted that during these past ages, scarcely any progress has been made in this branch of science. Plato, though a philosopher, was a Greek, and has left us in this, as well as in some other of his writings, proofs of his insincerity; he was convinced of the truth which he announced, that the modulations of the voice had special significations, representing signs which united the idiom with nature; but this discovery which he claimed, was not his own; he became acquainted with it during his travels, or adopted it from those who brought it from the East, where such a tradition as to the primitive language had been preserved, as well as the principles of the numeral philosophy, of which Pythagoras claimed the invention, in the same way also concealing their true origin. If a philosophical examination had led Plato to the discovery of the plan which he published, and to be convinced, as he says, that amongst the modulations of the human voice, the *r* enters into words as a note of movement; that the *i* denotes something subtile and penetrating; the *l* stupor, and that the *d* and *t* signify detention and restraint, all indubitable truths; he had then also observed by the same rule, the signification of all the other modulations; he had reasoned differently, and the arguments of his Cratylus had been less metaphysical and more persuasive: he had then corrected his Greek alphabet, reducing it to sixteen elements, and would have presented in the synopsis of its significations a small group of signs, but sufficient in their combinations to represent all the objects of nature characterized by their several attributes. His Cratylus shows that his philosophy had done much in support of the plan which he announced, but it also affords demonstration that this plan was not the production of his own genius. The remains of the scientific opinions of the primitive world captivated his great mind; he saw their connexion with nature, but not having received them in all the purity and perfection of their origin, his Cratylus has in it the same confusion of ideas as are to be found in his *Timæus*.

Every system which is not supported and confirmed by some truths falls by reason of its novelty. The elements of speech

are really in nature, therein they have their signification ; and though it is not denied that a powerful and perspicacious intellect may discover those elements, an attempt to do so will be always considered as a mere chimera when it meets with insuperable obstacles in its outset, as happened to Plato's experiment on the Greek language. Thus, though the system of Plato is now produced as evidence in what I believe to have been the primitive language, it was for many ages held to be a theory more brilliant than solid.

Certainly, had Plato, or any of the philosophers who after him have undertaken to examine this question, met with the only idiom the elements of which have been dictated by nature, they had been able to develope the system in a satisfactory method ; it has been the want of that guide that has bewildered them, so as to leave us more struck with the beauty than with the practicability of their plan.

The primitive idiom can be no other than that which has its origin in nature ; the faculty of speech must have its elements, as all things have their principles ; these are not mere accidents in the general order of the universe, nor were the modulations of the voice arbitrary in language, till man began to disavow and to commit violence on the laws of nature.

The primitive idiom infused by the Creator must have been equal in perfection to all his other works, and have been interwoven with all the harmonies of nature. Whoever examines with attention the admirable construction of the organs of speech, and observes their mechanical action in the various and nicely expressive modulations of the voice, so precisely calculated for the most distinct representation of all ideas to be conveyed by speech, will acknowledge that this wonderful organization cannot be the result of accident, but that it must belong to the all-wise dispositions of the Supreme Power in the creation of man ; and it is also presumable that the infused idiom was not limited to the expression of the principal wants of man in a rude state, but that it embraced all the knowledge which was necessary to establish his supremacy over all other created beings :* though this last supposition be not admissible, yet it will be allowed that the observations which the first man must

* Though the author in this place allows that his hypothesis may not be admitted even as a probability, yet it certainly cannot be disputed by those who believe that God brought all the animals before Adam that he might name them ; and this immediately after the creation, long before Adam could have studied the philosophy of his language ; this argument is fully developed in the next chapter.

have made on the idiom with which he was gifted, must have led him to a comprehension of its elements, so as to enable him to adapt to all things names corresponding to those elements; he must have observed for example in pronouncing the *r*, a violent vibration of the tongue and a roughness of sound, from whence he must have concluded that this modulation was intended to express in the composition of words, harshness and movement, and so on as regards the other modulations. Man thus instructed by his observation (if his knowledge was not infused as is most probable) in the signification of the various modulations, took of them those which were necessary to express each object which he desired to represent; thus for example, when he gave a name to a stone, seeing that its qualities were strength and roughness, he took the modulation *a* to represent the first quality, and *rr* to represent the second, and called it, *a-rr*; to express altitude simply, he took the *o*; if pointed, he added the *i*; and if the height thus described was remarkable for its extraordinary mass, then to distinguish it from those which were near to it, he added another *o*, and called it *o-ri-o*.* In this manner the first man must have proceeded in giving to things names suitable to their exterior qualities or constitutive properties. Plato says that he who first gave names to things must have been more than human, for seeing that the true essence of the name is to represent the qualities of the thing to which it is applied, he who so applied it must necessarily have known all the qualities of things; he said also, that the names of things existed in nature. Publius Nigidius expresses in substance the same opinion.† This truth which can only be proved by the primitive idiom, with which these philosophers were not acquainted, they must have received by tradition, and must have adopted from the strong impression which it made on their minds.

Many of the learned have supposed that the primitive language of the human race must have been rude and imperfect, since in the beginning but a few words were necessary to express the then limited wants of man. This is a gross unphilosophical error; the greater or lesser number of man's necessities could not have had any degree of influence on the formation of his idiom; a language may be as perfect as I

* This is the name of a mountain in the Pyrennes, having precisely the characteristics here specified; it is called the "*Pico de orio*."

† As cited by Aulus Gillius. "*Nomina verbaque non posita fortuito sed quadam vi et ratione nature.*"

suppose the first to have been, without being rich ; perfection results from the syntax and mechanism of a language, and its riches is in the abundance of its words ; these are formed in proportion as the intellectual acquirements of man are extended. Perfect languages are but rare, copious languages are many ; the riches of the first kind are permanent, those of the latter are transient ; for the words of the first being definitions of the constitutive properties of the signs which they represent, become an indelible record for ages, even though the idiom to which they belong be lost ; whereas the words of the second being merely conventional, are forgotten with the objects or the science to which they refer, even though the idiom to which they belong may yet remain in use. Had those who have supposed the primitive language to have been imperfect, meditated with philosophical attention on the first epochs of the creation, they would have seen, that though those necessities of man which belong to the mere conservation of his existence may have been but few, those of his will must have been very numerous :—the magnificent spectacle of all nature laid open to his observation, must have furnished him with an infinity of ideas and comparisons which in conversation with his partner must have developed the resources of his language ; and even on the supposition that this language was not infused by the Creator, the mere fact that man was created adult, and consequently in possession of all his rational faculties, and thus capable of comparing and discussing, suffices to prove the absurdity of the opinion referred to. Man came perfect from the hands of his Creator ; his mind altogether free from those inexact ideas and absurd pre-occupations which we derive from our education, and which embarrass our intellectual progress, he was able to profit fully by the instructions of the nature with which he was surrounded ; at that period there had not interposed between nature and man that dense cloud of prejudice which his perversity has produced, and which now scarcely permits him to discern the most obvious and simple truths, in the confusion produced by his chemical instruments, his physical machines, his mathematical calculations, and his systems full of abstractions and contradictions. Nature, always rich, but in her operations simple, offered to the first man more copious and useful truths, than now after so many ages, are obtainable by the presumption of our pompous doctors most commonly leading their disciples through empty theories into the mazes of error.

I do not, however, pretend to say that if man had been obliged to form his own language he would have made it as perfect as is the primitive language ; but certainly he would not have formed one of rough, gross interjections, and destitute of syntax as has been supposed ; to whatever object he gave a name, this had its qualities, as handsome or otherwise, great or small, soft or hard, hence the adjective ; for this object he must have conceived some action, hence the verb ; this action must have had relation to the past, the present or the future, hence the tense. His conceptions must also have arisen in the proper order of nature, thus the substantive must have preceded the adjective, because the quality cannot exist without the subject ; matter preceded form, for form cannot exist without matter, and so as to the other parts of speech ; guided then by these just rules of nature, man cannot but have used a rational language infinitely more perfect than that which some philosophers have attributed to him.

CHAPTER II.

The Primitive Language was inspired by the Creator and not formed by Man.

THE Gentile writers who have desired to say something about the creation of man, have attributed to mere chance that wonderful work ; they have said that our race originated in a sudden production of a multitude of individuals at the same moment, and in all parts of the earth, by a “*certain modification*,” which it received of a “*certain unknown influence*.” It is evident that if such a mode of reasoning be admitted for the explanation of phenomena, there is not an absurdity which may not be made an established doctrine, or a difficulty which does not admit of an easy solution. It must be considered then as a mere delirium of the imagination, which obscures the reason, and which can only be assimilated to the extravagant conceptions of the poet who attributes the peopling of the earth to the stones of Deucalion.* For a time, however, this prepos-

*Virgil l. Georg. Quo tempore primum
Deucalion vacuum lapides jactavit in orbem
Unde homines nati, durum genus.

terous doctrine had its followers, and these maintained that the race of man so generated, was without the faculty of speech, but that compelled by necessity, he afterwards found means of giving utterance to a certain number of sounds expressive of his wants; Diodorus, Cicero, and Horace, amongst others seem to have countenanced this opinion, carried away doubtless by the torrent of general opinion; or influenced by that of some philosophers who preceded them, more especially by the writings of Lucretius.*

But we must reject all such unphilosophical theories as being opposed to the plan of nature,—we must consider man to have been created adult, and endowed with all the qualities necessary for the purposes for which he was created. This view of his origin is not only conformable to scripture, but it is the only one which can be admitted in sound reasoning. The works of the creation were all made perfect, each in its kind, it is not to be supposed that man was an exception; to say that he was a savage, destitute of rationality, is not only to degrade the most noble of the works of God, but to question the wisdom of the Creator. The extension of our intellectual power, the delicacy of our sensation, the sublimity of our imagination, the perspicacity of all our faculties, indicate that there is a state of perfection natural to man as well as to every other portion of the creation, and it is not to be imagined that God made the principle and origin of this species incomplete, withholding from it those perfections with which he so abundantly endowed all the others.

Presuming then that man was created with the full possession and exercise of all his faculties, it is to be considered whether amongst his endowments was a language completely formed, or whether he formed it himself by means of the faculty which he found to be in the harmonious mechanism of the organs of his speech, and under the direction of nature giving a special signification to each sound of the voice: those who adopt the second opinion, contend that as all the physical faculties of man are complete, that he sees, hears, and moves, by the effect of his mere will,—so in the same way the oral mechanism being made to give utterance to sounds, there was not any necessity for an infused idiom to enable him to express his wants; the aptitude of his organs required only the exercise of his will to produce the full exercise of their functions.

* *Ac varios linguæ sonitus natura subegit
Miltere, et utilitas expresit nomina rerum.*—(Lib. 5.)

These observations are entitled to much respect, for it cannot be denied that man has in the organs of speech the means of producing a perfect language ; nor can it be denied that nature which displays in all her works an admirable order and harmony, has produced such an intimate relation between the sentiments of the mind and the modulations of the voice, as to direct man with unerring propriety in the choice of the modulation for the expression of the sentiment. Notwithstanding these truths, there are others which defeat the conclusion attempted to be deduced from them, and which determine the judgment in favor of the opinion that language was infused.

Firstly, it is to be remarked that there undoubtedly exists in man's nature two distinct idioms,—one animal, and the other rational. If the language of which we treat was that which depends on mere animal impulse under the excitement of the passions,—as laughing or crying are produced by pleasure or pain, there would be no room for argument ; for we observe this animal idiom to be uniform throughout the human race in all parts of the earth, and hence it is evident that the reasoning faculty has no agency in the formation of it ; these are functions which nature has reserved to herself, and she does not leave to man the power of violating those laws, and that uniform order, by which she indicates in his gestures and his interjections the passions which agitate his soul ;—this is instinct ; such also is the language of brutes—certainly not infused ; the bull roars, the horse neighs, and the dog barks, by means of the mechanical disposition of the organs intended to give utterance to the various modifications of their feelings or wants. The rational idiom is the product of the understanding, and peculiar to the race of man ; it is composed of articulated words ; the animal idiom which he possesses in common with the brutes, is instinctive, and composed of interjections ; the first depending on the caprice of man, has as many forms as there are nations ; the last made immutable by the imperative power of nature, is uniform and universal in each race of the animal creation.

Brute animals are deprived by nature of the power of extending or improving any of their faculties, their idiom is therefore unchangeable ; thus the individual though separated when quite young from all communication with his kind, yet uses the same tones to express his wants or feelings as belong to all others of his species.

But in the examination of the rational idiom, the first characteristic which it presents to us is the absolute liberty with

which it may be varied : thus there now exists a multitude of distinct languages formed by the caprice of man, and varying in a greater or lesser degree from the rules of nature. In the first individual of the human race this liberty was tempered in some measure by the exemption of his mind from all preoccupations ; but this very fact affords an argument against the supposition of his having formed such a perfect and rich language as is that which we consider to have been the primitive, in the short interval between the moment when he was called on to use it, and that of his creation. We will allow for an instant that the rational faculty of the first man enabled him to ascertain the signification of the modulations of his voice by the effects which they produced on himself, yet he would not therefore be able to form a perfect idiom immediately : a very mature examination of each object must have been necessary before he could give to it an appropriate name ; without a very prolix study he could not have formed the grammar and all the mechanism of his language ; abundant as were the perfect models offered by nature for his imitation, a very distinct comprehension and very exact observation of her sublime principles were necessary before he could attempt to copy them. A language which even in its most minute words gives an exact idea of the qualities and attributes which they represent, must have required for its formation not only a knowledge of its radical principles, but a profound critical and philosophical examination of, and a perfect acquaintance with, all the productions of nature.

When we consider the beautiful structure of the basque language in which are the most lively and correct representations of nature, we must allow that it was not within the faculty of man to copy her with so much accuracy ; we do not see in it any of that liberty with which man was endowed, and which had he used it must necessarily have led him to deviate more or less from her precepts. All the productions of nature are finished and perfect,—all proclaim their divine origin ; but continual and uniform experience furnishes conclusive proofs that there is not one of the productions of man which is not marked by his characteristic disposition to improve the works of nature ; we have the most striking illustration of this disposition, in the multitude of languages now in use, all of them full of proofs of this tendency in man to separate from the rules of nature ;—hence is to be inferred that the primitive language would not have been exempted from the defects consequent on that disposition, had it been of human origin. Apart from this considera-

tion, it has been made evident that the first man could not have formed this language, all perfect as it is, in the first moments of his existence, nor indeed till after years of profound observation and meditation ; but on examining the history of the creation we shall find that he had scarcely come out of the hands of the Creator before he made use of his faculty of speech in all its extension and perfection. The sacred historian Moses, informs us that man was formed on the sixth day, and the instant that he was animated he was occupied in listening to the precepts of his Creator ; immediately afterwards, and before woman was formed, he was employed by order of God in giving to all the animals of the creation names, not only distinctive, but names defining the principal qualities of each species ; he must have possessed then, not only an idiom complete in all its parts—but he must have had also a perfect knowledge of all nature, and this must have been infused ; indeed the holy scripture says expressly, that God endowed our first parents with consummate wisdom, and that he manifested to them all the glory of all his works, and the several purposes for which they were intended.*

The reader will adopt whichever of the two opinions in question may appear to him to be the most reasonable, in the examination of the primitive language, admiring the extent of intellectual power, if he supposed that language to have been formed by the genius of man, and the great importance of the various knowledge which it embraces, if he considers it the work of the Creator.

* This part of the author's argument he has labored with extraordinary prolixity, and I have therefore abridged it as much as was possible without absolute mutilation, because for unbelievers in the Mosaic relation it can be of no account, and for believers it is superfluous, since that relation offers at first view a syllogism which precludes all possibility of doubt ; God spoke to Adam as soon as he created him ; the language of God must have been perfect ; Adam then understood, by infusion, a perfect language. Mr. Erro had amongst his opponents even priests, *this* may have been a reason for his copiousness on this scriptural authority ; *their* cavils at least must be presumed to have been foreclosed by his reasoning.

CHAPTER III.

The Confusion of Babel cannot be opposed as a Proof against the Existence of the Primitive Language.

THE confusion of Babel has, on the authority of ecclesiastical writers, been urged as an argument to prove that the primitive language was lost; to fix solidly our opinion on this point, let us firstly examine the authorities. Several writers have supposed that the Tower of Babel was built in the pride of man and in disobedience to the orders of God, who had pre-determined the dispersion; hence they consider the confusion of tongues to have been a punishment for the rebellion, and a total oblivion of the primitive language: this is the most general opinion amongst the expositors of holy writ, (St. Aug. de Civ. Dei—lib. 16, ch. 4,) but there are many others who deny that the building of the tower was a crime, or in disobedience to any order of God,—these consider it to have been intended as a monument to eternize the memory of this remarkable epoch of the dispersion already determined on, according to that passage in Genesis, “We will make our name famous before we disperse over the earth:” such is the opinion of Abulense, of Rénald and many of the rabbins. There is still a third opinion that has many adherents, these contend that in the expressions “labii unius et sermonum eorundeni”—and the rest of the chapter to the tenth verse, is to be understood the conformity of opinions as to the construction of the tower, and in no wise the universality of language, nor its subsequent confusion; Saint Gregory, who is also of this opinion, adds that the words of the scripture merely imply that whilst men lived in one society they spoke the same language, but that when they were divided into separate societies, each of these formed a separate language, to the end that the separation should be more complete; and this diversity of languages he considers to have grown naturally out of the separation, and not to have been produced by a special intervention of the Supreme Power. This variety of opinions amongst authors of such distinguished erudition, shows how little foundation there is for asserting as an undoubted fact, that the primitive language was wholly lost in the confusion of Babel. It is not to be conceived that a people

could at once forget their own language, and achieve all the difficulties which belong to the formation of others; this consideration has led many writers to conclude, that had it not been for the confusion of Babel, the formation of the many idioms, so various in character, as those which now exist, had been impossible; certainly this is an argument of weight; but nevertheless it is also certain, that distinct idioms might have been formed out of a common language, and it is not necessary therefore to suppose, that the confusion of the tower was a miraculous mixture of idioms. From the general history of the nations of the dispersion, we learn of the severe hardships to which they were exposed throughout many generations, and for a long series of years; and that before they arrived at their several destinations they were in complete barbarism and ignorance; such were the first settlers in Italy, in Greece, and in Ægypt, mere huntsmen and wanderers without fixed residences, or any regular social union, till formed to it in one place by Saturn, in another by Janus, and so on by Orpheus, Osiris, and similar heroes—these taught them to live together under laws, and instructed them in agriculture and the useful arts. During their savage and wandering state, their idiom must have been corrupting and degrading *pari passu* with their civilization, and impoverishing till it was reduced to the mere expression of the necessities of a barbarous people; such primitive words as were preserved, must have received a new character from inflexions, aspirations, and guttural sounds, so as finally to be no longer cognizable; whilst other words formed in barbarism and ignorance were introduced, and thus the language become disfigured so as not to preserve the least trace of its original structure and grammar. After the lapse of some ages, the intermixture of nations must have produced by the intermixture of their languages, new idioms still further removed from the primitive. As societies have returned towards civilization, their idioms have been gradually improved and polished; but what they have thus acquired does not belong to the perfections of the primitive language, the precepts of which were lost; the nations, each in the degree of its civilization, have perfectionated their languages, and these have nothing in common but the few principles to which the primitive had been reduced during the periods of barbarism; more or less of those principles may be found in all the languages which we are acquainted with, and we may infer that those languages which preserve the fewest of

them, belong to nations which have had the least of civilization in the barbarous epochs referred to.

It was in this progress of human affairs that all existing languages have been formed, and that the primitive has been forgotten; yet not wholly extinguished, for it is not to be supposed that all the nations of the dispersion have passed through precisely the same eras of barbarism in the same degree;* some of them whether because more numerous, or better ordered in their migrations, or more careful in preserving the legislation, police, and manners of their ancestors, may not have degenerated as much as others; these must have preserved more of their original language, as of their civilization.

But though we should allow that the confusion of Babel was a punishment inflicted for the pride of man, and had instantly produced an absolute extinction of the primitive language amongst the people of Senaar, which is all the concession which can be asked, it does not follow that such extinction was universal; those who partook of the crime suffered the punishment; but it is certain that Noah and his family, and a great portion of the population of Armenia, did not participate in the project which brought down the divine judgment, consequently there can be no reason to suppose that they suffered by it.

Grotius, and the author† of the treatise "*On the Mechanism of Language*," think that the primitive language still subsists scattered and mixed up with others: Theodorotus, George Amira, and the Maronites of Lebanon, maintain that it is the Syriac; Bochart, Calmet, and several other writers assert that it is the Hebrew: this variety of opinions adds force to the reasons already exposed, for concluding that the confusion of Babel, in whatever point of view considered, did not operate the extinction of the primitive idiom.

* Mr Erro analyses the denominations of various places in different parts of the earth, and he asserts that the principal provinces, mountains and rivers in America have names perfectly descriptive of their localities according to the system of primitive geography; and hence infers that the language was carried to that region in very considerable purity, and as may be presumed also with a proportionable degree of the civilization and of the arts of the primitive societies, an opinion which is very much countenanced by the existence of those great works in roads, mines, &c. in Mexico, which so excited the astonishment of the Spaniards on their first arrival in that country. Does not this his opinion, receive still further support from the late researches of our learned philologists into the Indian idioms of this portion of the American continent?

† President de Brosses, (it is supposed.)

CHAPTER IV.

Solution of some Objections to the foregoing Opinion.

IN opposition to the foregoing reasoning, some objections may be urged which it may be proper to reply to before we proceed in our argument. The principal of these is, that we cannot seek for an explanation of events previous to the deluge, in one language only, because according to the best opinions, the earth having been as fully peopled at that epoch as at present, it is to be presumed that the separation of nations at great distances, their various climates, civil and religious institutions and customs, must have formed as great a variety of languages as now exist.

This difficulty is easily solved when we consider the mode in which the earth was peopled. Had it been peopled as it was after the deluge, when the families separated by order of Noah at distances which cut off all communication between them, lost during their migrations all their previous knowledge, then indeed we may suppose a variety of idioms to have been formed; but the manner in which the earth was first peopled was wholly different from this; it was by a gradual extension of families into large societies, all connected with a common centre; there was not any dispersion or separation by great distances, the community of languages was therefore continued: it is true that when the earth had been fully peopled in this way, that the distances between nations opposed the same difficulties to inter-communication as now exist; and that the customs, the moral character, the legislation, the whole civil and social order of societies having undergone various modifications, depending on the different positions and circumstances in which they were placed, or on the influence of climates and an infinity of inferior causes, these may have operated to produce great variations in the use of the primitive language, though without altering its rudiments or substance.

Another objection which has been insisted on as very important, though in fact it is quite futile, is this;—"How is it possible that the primitive language can have been preserved in a corner of Spain from the ravages of time and the ruins of empires; how have been exempted from the common fate of

the idioms belonging to the most powerful and populous nations of the earth,—Persians, Medes, Ægyptians, and Carthaginians.” This negative argument is without force against the solid reasons for believing the Euscaran or basque language to have existed in the first ages of the world. The Arabic is a living language, and yet it had its origin in the dispersion ; there are also the Chinese, and the Sanscrit of the Bramins, which have escaped the common fate of languages. We cannot doubt but that a primitive language existed entire in the time of Noah, it must have been his language and that of his family ; then that was the general language at the time of the dispersion ; what difficulty then in believing that the primitive language has been preserved till this time, as well as several other languages known to have had their origin in the dispersion.

CHAPTER V.

*Of the Rules necessary to be observed in the Analysis of Words,
and of the true Euphony.*

BEFORE entering on an examination of the literary monuments of the primitive world, it is indispensable to treat of the rules to be observed in seeking for an exact explanation of the words which compose them. It is not to be understood that in my analysis I shall follow the arbitrary method of the etymologists, nor that I pretend to found on their art an incontestible right in the Euscaran language to its primitive character : I shall pursue a more philosophical mode of investigation, the lights furnished by nature will guide me to the knowledge of words in their most minute elements, and enable me to distinguish and separate them from the interpolations with which nearly all languages have been vitiated.

It is the excellent character of the primitive language which opens the way to this investigation ;—what other language is there by which an analysis can be made of all the members of even its smallest words, presenting to us in each of them, the nature of the subject which it represents ? This rare property, in proportion as it develops the hitherto unknown history of a

celebrated people, discovers the necessity and great importance of analysis: the words in a philosophical language being but a group of monograms, or modulations of the voice interwoven with each other, some representing the subject, and some its distinct qualities, it is by a proper use of analysis only, that we can penetrate the philosophical structure of the word so as to ascertain its true import.

The arbitrary method of the etymologists, seeking in various languages the explanation of what they do not find in the one which they examine as original, opens the way by means of forced and incongruous derivations, to constructions merely fanciful, and terminating in a total misunderstanding of historical monuments:—But the primitive language must itself furnish the explanation of its words;—for being first, it cannot have inherited or borrowed from others.

If the learned men who have employed their talents in the investigation of this important matter, had in the commencement of their labors formed a correct idea of the character essential to a language which had its origin in the creation, they had not engaged in those toilsome but vain discussions, which have left the subject in a state so different from that required by sound criticism, and so unsatisfactory to mere curiosity.

Still more prejudicial to literature has been the detestable abuse of etymology by the Greeks,—that famous nation, mother of mendacity, and source of the gross errors in which the truth of history has been enveloped, from the period when they undertook to form out of it a portion of their patrimony of national glory. Their learned men, by means of etymology, have so confounded epochs, persons, and events, as to leave history in such obscurity, as that at this day it is a mere problem, whether in the accounts which they have transmitted to us of the first ages, we are more instructed by the portion of truth which may be discovered in them, or misled by their falsehoods:—deceitful by character, notorious for their inordinate vanity, the Greeks did not hesitate in attributing to their own language the origin of all things,—especially where they could find the least analogy in its sounds with the names of foreign persons, nations, or territories.*

* The propensity of the Greeks to falsehood, and their ignorance in history, are facts sufficiently notorious; nevertheless, as the admirers of Grecian literature are very numerous, and as it carries with it therefore a certain degree of authority, it may be as well to submit to the reader some of the opinions of the most learned ancients. Plato allows that the Egyptians considered the

I do not however infer from the abuse of etymology, that this branch of literature is useless as well as delicate : but it is an extremely nice science, and requires a profound knowledge of the history of languages and of nations, as well as a philosophical acumen which has not been the endowment of all those who in cultivating it have attempted to extend its limits beyond the bounds prescribed by philosophy : withal it has contributed powerfully to explain the mechanism of language, and to submit its component parts to grammatical rules ; it also furnishes the means of tracing derivative languages to their sources ; in that view it is recommended by Plato, Varro, Cicero, and Quintilian,—and by Locke and de Brosse amongst the moderns.

Analysis cannot be made in the idiom which we consider to be primitive, with all the nicety required by sound criticism, unless we have a previous acquaintance with the genius and mechanism which furnish rules for the formation of its words ; these rules are in a limited number, and are the only rules which can be applied ; nothing arbitrary can be admitted ; nothing of that license with which etymologists have defaced history : our speculations are confined to a single language, nor will there be in the examination of its words the smallest variation which will not be authorized by philosophical precepts.

One of the most essential rules to be observed in the investigation of the true signification of words, is to distinguish those superfluous letters which in all languages are added, for the purpose of giving that harmony and softness to the sound which is called euphony. A great deal has been written on this precept, but it appears to have been as much misunderstood as

Greeks “ *to be ignorant and trifling in history, and the accounts which they gave of themselves as fit storics for children.*” Herodotus acknowledges the same defects in his nation, (lib. 2.) where he treats of the expedition of Hercules to Egypt. Euripides in *Iphigenia*, says of his countrymen, that “ *they have not good faith in any matter.*” Amongst the Roman writers, Juvenal says,

—————“ Et quidquid græcia mendax
Audeit in historia.”

Pliny says that they are vain and impostors,—and again in another place,—“ *Mirum est quo procedat Græcæ credulitas, nullum tan impudens mendacium est, ut teste careat.*” Valerius Flaccus says,

—————“ te græcia fallax
Persequor.”—————

Omitting many others, I will conclude these citations with the opinion of Cicero as we find it in his oration “ *Pro Flaco.*”

“ *Tribuo illis literas, do multarum artium disciplinam, testimoniorum autem fidem et veritatem nunquam isti coluere.*”

many other properties of language : euphony does not consist, as some have supposed, in that musical tone which was used in the Grecian and Roman colloquial languages formerly, and is now used by the Chinese ; in the most perfect idioms this is an accident, not a property ; and in the least perfect, it is a means of supplying by intonation the want of expression and precision : such idioms may be called musical, but they are not euphonical : euphony is a property of language, and is to be found in its very nature and mechanism ; not in its musical character, which even considered as prosody, is a faculty distinct from the idiom. A language which in the composition of its words, uses with suitable discretion the elements of the voice, so as to express the characteristic qualities of objects, in such a way as to present a correct and complete idea of them, is essentially euphonical ; for it copies nature, which is perfect and harmonious in all its parts : consequently the words of such a language cannot and ought not to be soft or smooth, when they are intended to convey an idea of rough and harsh qualities ; an attention to this precept has produced many of those beauties which we admire in the best poets, who have supplied by art this perfection in which their language has been deficient. Thus who but must be pleased with that passage in Virgil wherein he represents Juno opening the iron gates of the temple of War,

“ et cardine verso
Belli ferratos rupit Saturnia postes.”

The very roughness of this verse makes it as agreeable in this passage, as is the smoothest in any of the Eclogues,—and this effect is produced by the judicious selection of words, an art in which Virgil excelled ; the best painter is he who most correctly copies nature, and considering euphony to be one of the most beautiful properties of language, that idiom is the most perfect, which in the composition of its words, represents with most accuracy the harmonies of nature.

Harshness and smoothness being qualities in nature, ought also to be in the idiom which pretends faithfully to represent her ; therefore euphony cannot consist in, or depend on, the tones of the pronunciation, but must be an essential property in the words, which formed on philosophical principles, preserve the true euphony in whatever natural tone they be pronounced. This is perfectly exemplified in the primitive language ; for example the Laburtanians use in their dialect an intonation as wholly different from that of the interior of Guipuscoa, as this

is from that of the country bordering on the Bidaossa and on the sea coast, the musical cadences and softness of which are peculiarly agreeable; thus though the language is the same in all the provinces, yet they appear to have divers idioms; and so the Romans imagined: in the same manner one idiom may be supposed to be more euphonic,—and another more rude and common; these variations are so great, that were the basque provinces separated by wide distances, it would not be doubted but that they had languages altogether distinct.

The words of language are composed of a certain determinate number of modulations; all those produced by nature are precise, appropriate, and perfect, though some are rough and others smooth. Many of the learned, not having paid attention to this fact, have absurdly asserted that the *r*, as also the *k* and the *t*, are not euphonical letters; had they consulted nature, they would have found that the *r* in its proper place is as euphonical, as the soft *e*, or the sonorous *n*. In a philosophical language there cannot be any euphony without propriety; and there cannot be any propriety in attempting to represent rough things by soft modulations: The true Euphony then consists in an exact representation of nature in her different relations, by those modulations which are best adapted to the characteristic properties of the subjects to be described by them, all modulations being euphonical when judiciously employed in the formation of words. Had those of our Spanish literati whose preventions have led them to consider the basque language to be harsh and unpolished, been aware of these principles, they had not ventured on those bold assertions which in effect condemn the language for its very perfection; in observing those harsh sounds of our patronymics from which they have so hastily inferred the want of softness in our language, they would have seen that those names being definitions of localities, seats of our families placed in rough mountainous regions, could not be otherwise than rough and harsh.

The imitation of nature then, is that which constitutes euphony, and perfects a language; but as there are different degrees of perfection, so we cannot consider a language to be completely euphonical, which in its words gives merely a representation of the subject referred to; it is necessary that the several parts of those words should be so connected, as to make the pronunciation continuous; it was therefore that in the primitive language, wherever a rigorous definition brought two vowels together in the same word, a consonant was inserted

between them, so that the pronunciation might not be arrested, and thus the unity of the word might be preserved: in such cases, the signification of the inserted consonant does not enter into the composition of the word, its only office is to euphonize it; therefore it is to be rejected whenever we examine the word in its primitive formation: for example, in the composition of the word *odola* which signifies the blood, the original word is *o-ola*, exactly expressing the idea as to that humor of the body, which belonged to the physical doctrine of the primitive world: but the word, though very expressive, was not quite euphonical; for the union of two vowels occasioned two expulsions of the breath in pronunciation, therefore the *d* was placed between the two vowels to preserve the unity of the word, and to render it perfectly euphonical. This same rule has been very much attended to in the latin language, as for example in the words, *re-d-eo*, *re-d-integratur*, where the *d* is not placed as part of the composition of the words necessary to their significations, but for the mere purpose of euphonizing them.

In the Grecian language also this rule has been observed, for example in the word *δι-κ-αιου* in which according to Plato the *κ* is euphonic;* and indeed there is not a known language, even amongst those the least polished, in which more or less attention has not been paid to euphony; hence we must conclude that it is a principle of nature herself.

Whether it be owing to that instinctive disposition which leads man to seek for short methods for the purpose of diminishing his labor; or to the influence of climate on pronunciation; certain it is that language has every where been disfigured by a multitude of syllabic contractions. This defect being universal in the languages of the dispersion, consequently the primitive words which are still found in them, have undergone the same degree of alteration; hence it is necessary in analyzing them to supply the suppressed letters for the purpose of restoring the true pronunciation; and this is easily done, because in general the words which have been altered, present their meaning at first view notwithstanding this change of form; besides, the primitive language being free from these irregular contractions, its very genius points out the rectification.

As all the means which have been employed to render words euphonical, are so many precepts necessary to be kept in view

*Plat: in Crat: "Merito δι-κ-αιου ἐστ' ἀπὸ τοῦ κ, ὡς τοῦ
 Πολιτικῆς προλάλησιν ἡ χάρις τοῦ κ."

in a correct analysis, that we may not confound the elements of the composition, so it is essential that we do not forget *affinity*, which substituting one letter for another for the purpose of rendering words more smooth, has been employed in most languages; thus we so frequently find the *b* substituted for the *p*, *l* for *r*, *t* for *d*, *c* for *s*, and *k* for *g*,—and vice versa: the Euscaran language which explains the qualities of objects by their appellations, calls the sun *ekus-quia*, but as this word has not all the softness which the delicacy of the language required, the *k* though it enters into the composition of the word with its true value, is changed into a *g*, and the word becomes *egus-quia*; so in analysing this word we must reject the *g* as merely euphonical, and restore the *k*.

It is also necessary to observe, that the alphabets of all languages are not equally complete; hence it occurs that some of the words of the primitive which have been preserved in other languages, have not the full and precise expression which belong to them, for want of suitable modulations in those languages; in such cases the nearest affinities have been employed; thus for example in the word *uts-ilun* which the Greeks received from the primitive language, not having in their own the modulation *ts*, they took *ps*. So in the word *bisitz* or *fisitz*, which with its characteristic of an appellative noun is *bisitzza*, or *fisitzza*, and means life, the Greeks adopting it to represent nature, were obliged to substitute for *tz*, an *s*, and pronounced *φυσis*, or *fisis*.*

In the examination and analysis of primitive words found in other languages, it is also necessary to observe that terminations have been added in harmony with the several characters of those languages; consequently such foreign terminations are to be rejected; this is easily effected, seeing that the primitive word itself never varies, therefore the difference made in its form by the foreign language is easily detected by adverting to the genius of that language; for example, if we would know what is the formation in the primitive, of the word *Venus* in the latin language, considering the genius of that language, and that the radical word cannot have varied, we shall expect to find it by abstracting it from the latin declination, *Ben-us*, *Ben-eris*, *Ben-erem*, we have then *ben* as the radical.

These are the principal rules to be kept in view in the analysis of words, and I have here stated the motives of con-

* I for u see what is said on upsilon.

venience or necessity which have introduced them into languages, that the reader may see the reason of my frequent application of them, and not attribute this to an arbitrary caprice.

CHAPTER VI.

Of Numbers, or the first Part of the System of the Universe.

SECTION I.—OF THE MATTER OR BODY OF THE UNIVERSE.

It is not to be doubted but that many of the most important productions of the human intellect have been lost : the sciences wholly dependent on the fate of the nations which have cultivated them, have simultaneously suffered by the decadences brought about by the evil passions of men ; of some nations scarcely more than the names are known to us ; so of their knowledge, the traces are merely sufficiently apparent to excite our curiosity ; to satisfy this, what travels ! watchings ! labors ! and excavations ! and what sterile results ! the powerful hand of time has destroyed all. Yet in the midst of these melancholy reflections there remains for the studious man the means of examining the scientific monuments of that nation from which all the others have derived, and which left the principles of its knowledge as an inheritance for succeeding ages.

Had all nations been equally careful, as was the primitive, to form a perfect language, and to deposit in it the elements of their knowledge, we should now notwithstanding the extinction of those nations be able to learn what was the state of science amongst them, and also the chief events of their histories. It is thus that the *great* ~~Creek~~ primitive people, now reduced to a few agricultural villages, has transmitted to us the most sublime principles of natural philosophy and other sciences ; the words which contain these, hitherto generally presumed to be merely conventional, used by literary men as by rustics, have been as little known in their scientific character by the one as by the other ; and the few persons who have given their attention to

this language, have not carried their observations beyond the ordinary limits of research into other languages.

But a new order of important discoveries will now exhibit to us the basque people with all their titles to celebrity, derived from periods unknown to history, when was laid the foundation of the sciences which have descended even to this epoch.

The basque numeration will first occupy our attention, and it will be seen that this part of the language, embraces in a few, not exceeding thirteen words, all the elements of natural philosophy.

The learned will certainly examine with pleasure this primitive system, which having been scattered through the ancient civilized world, we yet find some traces of amongst the Hebrews as in Moses, amongst the Chaldeans in Ezekiel, amongst the Arabs in Job, amongst the Greeks in Pythagoras and Plato, amongst the Ægyptians in Eudoxus and other authors cited by Plutarch, amongst the Romans in Cicero, Virgil, and Macrobius, amongst the Chinese and Mexicans in their traditions : this system lost to the literary world, is now after a long course of ages discovered entire amongst the basque people who originated it ; it is found not full of anomalies as it was understood by Pythagoras and in the East, and as it was published in Greece, but in all its original purity. Nevertheless, I am not perfectly sure that I have effected my purpose with the utmost desirable accuracy ; for besides that the task is one of delicacy, requiring great exactness, the method in which the Euscaldunes proceeded in the explanation of their system, was not only very subtle and delicate, but affected a certain obscurity which renders the interpretation of it more difficult, from a want of auxiliary notices which have not come down to us.

This system, simple in its essential features, after presenting to us the creation of the first principles of all things, of the order in which they were created, and of the proportions in which they exist respectively to each other, and in the plan of nature ; which is truly the knowledge a priori of first causes ; makes us acquainted with the vast *soul* of the universe in the combination of three movements ; one elevating bodies,—another, though less in degree, modifying the first in a direction towards the centre of the universe,—and the third directing the bodies thus suspended to move round the centre.

This mode of explaining the movements of the universe is not less ingenious and simple, than the admission of *fecundity*, or a law by which motion as well as all other principles are

constantly reproduced ; it establishes a doctrine the reverse of that of Descartes, who held that nature preserves always the same quantity of motion.

Notwithstanding all the efforts of philosophers to discover perpetual motion, thus as it were to withdraw our system from the superintendence of the Supreme Being, the grand spectacle of the admirable harmonies of nature must make them sensible to its dependance on that being ; and in good faith they must confess, that motion cannot be unalterable, for the causes which co-operate to destroy force, being more than those which produce it, according to the doctrine of Newton, motion would certainly cease if the supreme power did not from time to time communicate a new impulse to it : this doctrine is that of the Euscaldunes, who observing that the principle of *fecundity* prevailed throughout the universe, considered it as a principle established by God to maintain the order of the creation in all its elements.

The primitive physical science, bounded by the simple notions furnished in the denomination and order of numbers, does not enable us to present our system supported by all those means which our ancestors undoubtedly possessed of satisfying the doubts which it may be of a nature to give rise to ; but in this respect, those who have adopted the theory of attraction have not any advantage over us ; with all the aid of their data and calculations, they never will be able to give solutions of the very serious difficulties and embarrassing doubts and contradictions which grow out of their theory.

One of the circumstances the most mysterious in the Euscaran language, is its numeration ; its definitions bear no analogy to the common idea of numbers ; in the composition of them there is much enigmatical obscurity, besides a total independence of each other, each carrying with it its own abstract idea ; these difficulties, and that of finding an indication of the first principle on which the nomenclature was formed, so discouraged me to the commencement of my work, as almost to persuade me to abandon it ; but in the course of my investigations I found many proofs that the celebrated systems brought to Greece from Ægypt, Persia and other countries of the east, had their origin in ages anterior to the deluge, and fixing my attention on the mysterious philosophy of Pythagoras and Plato, in which numbers have so great a part, I saw abundant reasons to conclude that those famous doctrines were founded on the principles of the basque numeration ; a few essays put me into the true road,

and led me clear of the labyrinth in which I had been engaged. It is now made evident to me, that all the harmonies of the Pythagorean numbers out of which Plato formed his celebrated *Timeus*, a work which has produced so many commentaries, are no other than systems raised on the notions relative to their numeration and their physical opinions; which the Euscaldunes had left spread over the East, but differing from them by those alterations which all systems borrowed from former ages have necessarily undergone: when after the migrations of the people of the dispersion they desired to revert to the sciences which had been comprised in the language of their ancestors, without that original to consult and by which to solve the doubts resulting from the imperfect relics of physical knowledge, they were obliged to form a system which might explain them in the best manner then possible: though the primitive system degenerated thus from its principles, yet enough of it remained to disclose some of the sublime ideas which it embraced, these captivated the sages of the East even to superstitious veneration, and finally became an essential portion of their theology. This philosophy brought to Europe by Pythagoras, formed a numerous sect which existed for many ages after his death; amongst those who most contributed to its celebrity was the great Plato,* he has left us in his *Timeus*, proof of his adhesion to it, and of his conviction that the universe and all its laws, are but the result of the proportion and power of numbers.

Ascending then to the origin of this system, we find that the Euscaldunes admitted of two epochs in the creation, both proceeding from a supreme ingenite being; the first epoch comprehending the creation of all the principles which enter into the constitution of the universe, the second epoch a space of six days, giving order to these same principles in the construction of the universe; of this second epoch the cosmogonies of all nations have given relations more or less exact, for all have preserved some tradition of it; but as to the first epoch, there exists no other than the basque nation which presents to us a systematic order of the creation of first principles: Moses confining himself to his chief object, that of making us acquainted with the power of the Creator, says only as to the first creation, "*in the beginning God made the heavens and the earth,*"

* Macrob. de Somno. Hinc et Plato postquam Pitagoricæ successione doctrinæ, et ingenii proprii divina profunditate cognovit nullam esse posse sine his numeris jugabilem competentiam in *Timeo* suo mundi animam per istorum numerorum contextionem in efabili providentia Dei fabricatoris instituit.

meaning all the principles which enter into this great work, and from which he then made the universe in six days; Moses then proceeds to relate the order of the creation, but is wholly silent as to the order in which the principles of nature were applied, and as to their harmonies and reciprocal relations in the grand edifice of the universe; and this, because seeing their operation in the general movement, he could not doubt of their having been previously created, as it is evident that the earth was, the abyss or space, the principle of fecundity, the waters and all the seed which were intended to produce fruits; these all existed before the six days, (see Genesis, ch. 1 and 2,) and the fact is confirmed by the primitive system.

According to the opinion of the Euscaldunes, before any thing existed God was an eternal principle: to manifest the unity and simplicity of his essence they called him *bat*, that is *one*; they believed that in this principle all things had their origin, were engendered by its mere perceptions, and were placed by its supreme intelligence in the most harmonious order. They supposed that numbers had their existence in the first productions of the creation, and therefore determined that the names of those creations according to the order in which they were created, should be the names of the numbers, and they gave to each creation a name containing a definition of its nature. The world according to the doctrine of that people is an animated being, the object of its creation good, and the principles which enter into the formation of the universe represent the attributes of the supreme Creator.

Pythagoras, and after him Plato, who found these doctrines much altered in the East, fell into the error of attributing to numbers a real power, and believed that the harmonies, and the lines and figures which represented them, had formed the universe; that is to say, they considered numbers as material entities, and as having those active principles which resided only in the creations represented by them; so by the aid of numbers, geometrical lines, and metaphysical abstractions, they attempted to explain all the harmonies of nature: thus the number *one* in the Euscaran numeration being a definition of God, in whom as a principle were all beings to which he could communicate existence, these philosophers believed that this creating faculty was in the number itself,—that the unit engendering another, formed two sides of a triangle, and that this could only be made perfect by the generation of a third side; they said that the elements were composed of triangles com-

bined ;* that the acute angle was the form of fire, the octagon of air, a dodecagon of the sphere of the world, an icosedron of water ; they said that a square was the earth, which as an inferior element differed from the form of the triangle in the degree of difference existing between the elements, without however losing its essence, for the triangle and the number three which represents it, was according to this philosophy the common measure of all things. They said as the Euscaldunes did, that the world was animated ; they supposed that the soul was united to the body in a certain numerical proportion, and that when the constitutive number was completed, this connexion of the soul and body could not be prolonged,—the one abandoned the other and produced death, to which opinion Virgil alludes, when he says, (Lib. 6, vers. 545,)

“ Explebo numerum redarque tenebris.”

Finally, they maintained that the universe was animated, that it might act in union with motion which is so ; that the edifice of the world was subject to a supreme cause, and that the generation of all beings was owing to an harmonious movement, by means of which the principles of things placed themselves in that order which constituted the properties of numbers.

If these philosophers instead of seeking in numbers and the lines which represented them, the faculties and purposes which they attributed to them, had applied those faculties to the elements which the numbers represent, the results of their doctrines had not been so sterile, nor would the sublimity with which their ideas at first view present themselves, have terminated in total disappointment : but the eastern nations from which they derived the principles of their philosophy, could not communicate more light, for they were totally ignorant of the primitive idiom ; it had been lost for many ages, and in that only a correct explanation and application of those principles could be found. They obtained and applied all that was then known upon the matter, but the comparison which we shall now make of our numeration with their opinions, will show that they sought the truth in its mere shadow.

BAT.

From the moment that God began to create, there was order and classification of the created beings, consequently there was numeration. God who is supreme wisdom and perfection,

* Diog. Laett. de vit. philosop.—Li. 3.

could not give being to his creatures but in the most harmonious order ; thus he did not create all things at the same moment,—this would have manifested his power ; but progressively, thus manifesting at the same time his power and his infinite wisdom : all things have a divine principle, all having their origin in God ; so of numbers. The Platonicians said “ *the principle of the number is divine, for it is unity.*” The basque language, in which numbers are the denominations of things created, considers *one* as father or first principle of this creation,—that is God ; the name of this number is *bat*, and is composed of *at*, *ata*—an articulation of infancy, which signifies father, and of the letter *b*, a mere expletive in the composition to give fulness to the pronunciation of the word ; the radical *at*, which with the characteristic letter *a* is *ata*, signifies also *generation*, a quality inherent in the father ; so we say *b*, *at-aitz-a* baptism ; as though we said *of generation abundance*,—that is, a sacrament in which resides abundantly the faculty of generating in the man who receives it. Thus the number one is father or generator of all the creatures ; that is, according to the basque opinion, *God* in whom exists all the constitutive principles of the universe.

Pythagoras and his disciples applied to unity the attributes which can reside only in God,—and in this respect, his *one* or *monas* conforms with our language : Zarates the master of Pythagoras, calls the number *one* the *father*, as it was called in Euscaran,—a proof that the name was taken from that language together with the doctrine (as to the properties of the number) taught by his sect : moreover the Euscaldunes represented this number by a point, as is seen in some medals and other ancient monuments ; the Pythagoricians and Platonicians did so also.

BI.

The basque language gave this name to the number *two*, it signifies *line*, as is seen in the word *bi-de-a*, the road : *bi* is composed of the modulation *i*, which signifies any thing *lineal*, *radiant*, and of the letter *b*, placed in the composition of the word merely to give fulness to the pronunciation ; by the definition of this word we see that in the physical system of the primitive age, the *line* or *longitude* was the first principle created, and in the proportion of the number *two*.

This opinion was faithfully transmitted to the nations of the

dispersion, and thus Macrobius,* who was acquainted with the opinions of Plato, and had studied very particularly the numeral philosophy of Pythagoras, says expressly, that the *line* was the first existence produced by the omnipotence of the monade or number *one*, and that consequently the *two* is the first number.

The Pythagoricians had an unfavorable opinion of this number, and having preserved in their schools all the mysteries and allegorical allusions with which the oriental imagination had obscured the most obvious truths, they said that *two* was a *poor number, defective*, that it was *discord* and *audacity*, the *genius of evil*, &c. &c., and of such a nature, that if its influence prevailed in the air it produced tempests, if in the mind vices, if in the body diseases, if in cities and families, seditions and discords.

As the line is a measure, and represents the distance or division between one point and another, and as according to the Pythagoricians, *separation or division is the origin of all evils*, hence generalizing this principle, giving to the number real power, (which does not belong to it) and abstracting the line, they attributed to *two* all the above mentioned properties, attempting thus to find the harmonies of the moral world in those of the physical.

IRU.

To the line succeeded the creation of motion in the proportion of the number *three*, as is indicated by the name of that number in basque, *i-r-u*, which signifies literally *of lineal movement abundance*; it is composed of the modulation *i*, before explained, of the note of motion *r*, and of the abundantial letter *u*.

Here then is the creation of motion, that admirable principle which presents to us the perpetual action of the universe; its nature is expressed by the number three the proportion in which it was created, and in which it is placed relatively to the other principles in the plan of nature†; thus we are assured

*Macrobius. "Dyas quia post monadem prima est, primus est numerus. Hæc illa omnipotentia solitaria, in corporis intelligibilis linea prima defluxit." And again, "Primus ergo numerus in duobus est, qui similis est linea."

† "The proportion in which it was created and in which it is placed," &c. The Spanish word *proporcion* which frequently occurs in this work, I have uniformly rendered by our word "*proportion*" as being preferable to ratio, relation, affinity, or their synonyms, though not completely covering the whole sense of the author; perhaps the best translation of this word would be into the French "*rapport*;" it is said "numbers had their existence in the first productions of the creation,"—and again, "the moment God began to create, there was order and classification in the created beings, and con-

that this principle will subsist perpetually as well as the others, and those are answered who have said, "*that the nature of the moving power not being known, it is impossible to determine a priori whether it will continue to act unceasingly.*"

The general persuasion amongst those who are most profound in physical science is, that motion is a property of matter; but we see that the primitive doctrine held on the contrary, that motion was created before matter: it was created infinite because *term* had not yet been created, and its first direction was a right line, because that was the only principle which had been previously created, consequently it could not act in any other direction.

The Platonicians said that the number three was a full number, and represented abundance and multitude, this was precisely the opinion of the Basques, who even at this time, in saying to *hold* or possess, use the name of this number, thus *iru-qui*; and money they call *d-iru*.

Those philosophers also said that this number, which they represented by a triangle, corresponded to the perfections of the soul; Virgil alludes to this doctrine thus

"Numero deus impare gaudet."

This opinion was founded on the doctrine of the primitive system, that in the number three was created the principle of motion; in the philosophy of Plato, the soul and movement were identic, thus with the imperfect notions which they had of the primitive doctrine, they attributed to this number perfection: though it is true that motion had its being, and the soul of the Universe its origin in this number, yet its excellence and perfection belonged to other proportions distinct from *three*, as we shall see hereafter. The Pythagoricians attributed also to the number three superficies formed by three lines, but herein also they deviated from the primitive system, according to which no *matter* yet existed of which to constitute superficies; nor was

sequently numeration;" here then is the *rapport*, between the number and the principle created; thus this system supposes a philosophical relation, a certain harmony between the number and the principle, belonging to their simultaneous creation: the name of the number denotes at once the nature of the principle, and the order in which it was created; the principles or causes in the plan of nature are placed in a numerical order, which is their fit, harmonious, and therefore necessary order respectively to each other; this numerical order then corresponds exactly to the names of the numbers in the same order; in that order then the same relation which one number has to another, one principle has to another, and the *rapport* between the number and the principle is perfect.

there *form* to determine its figure, nor did longitude or motion yet produce any thing but a line.

LAU.

This is the name which the Basques give to the number four, so celebrated and mysterious in the school of Pythagoras that his disciples swore by it as most holy, and held that it was a number which reached nearly to the perfection of the soul.

As the primitive people had wisely established a theory of denominations to explain the sciences, they did not deem it sufficient simply to show that the creation of *matter* in the proportion of number *four* immediately followed that of the principle of motion, but gave also such a definition of it as to explain its essence, and therefore called the number which represented it *la-u*, which with the characteristic of an appellative noun is *laua*, from whence comes the latin *lava*, that is the *matter of Volcanoes*. The word is composed of the syllable *la* which signifies *union, adhesion*, and of the abundantial letter *u*; that is to say, matter is a thing of *abundant adhesion*; this is what we now call *cohesion*, or perhaps with equal propriety *hardness*, or *impenetrability*.

As soon as *matter* existed it had *motion*, which had been previously created in a *line*, which had also been created; consequently the Euscaldunes did not admit *inertia*, but considered repose as a forced state.

Matter infinitely divided, and carried to an infinite longitude, did not present to physical examination any of those qualities which enter into the formation of bodies, hence the propriety of defining it by a quality common to all, *cohesion*, in virtue of which the particles of matter united form bodies in which reside the mathematical properties of latitude, longitude, and depth.

As the Pythagoricians, notwithstanding their respect for this number four, never could understand that in the proportion of this number had been created matter, they fell into the error of concluding that matter was increate and coeternal with God; this opinion became so general in all antiquity, as to be received for a dogma in their theogonies and cosmogonies.

In the midst of the errors of antiquity as to matter, the first source of their opinions was manifest; for the same philosophers who taught the eternity of matter, also said that *in the proportions of the number four all bodies had their origin*; this which appears to be, and has always been considered as a very

absurd contradiction, has its explanation in the basque principle that in the number four God had created *matter*, from which in fact all the bodies of the universe have been composed.

This is not the only instance in which they unwittingly taught the contrary of what they believed ; the Pythagoricians *who distinguished the numbers by the names of the gods*, said that the *quadrangle corresponded to Ceres*, and this being one of the names of the earth which is for us the most sensible part of matter, it is easy to discover the source of their opinion, as well as that of the Ægyptians, who held that Isis (or the earth) was born on the *fourth day* : Plato says, that the *component parts of the earth are cubical* ; that is, composed of quadrangular facets, and that this number four had entered into the procreation of the world : and finally the Chinese, amongst whose extravagant pretensions are to be found many interesting notices concerning the nations of the dispersion, formerly believed that the globe which we inhabit was a square : this opinion of the Chinese has been cited as a proof of their ignorance in geography, but in truth, though the opinion taken in its apparent sense is absurd, in its origin it is far otherwise, for it is evidently derived from the primitive philosophy, which supposes the matter of which the earth is formed to have been created in the proportion of the number four.

BOST.

To the creation of matter succeeded that of *term* in the proportion of number *five* ; matter spread through the immensity of space was the principle of many things and privation of all ; that it might serve for the wise purposes of its creation, the Supreme Author created *term* to this matter ; thus it was separated into homogeneous portions, the particles of which were united by cohesion.

The Euscaran language calls the number five *bost*, a word composed of the letter *b*, placed in the composition to give fulness to the pronunciation, and of *ost*, *ost-a*, which signifies term, (limit, &c.) as is seen in the word *osta-tu-a*, the tavern, literally a thing placed at the term ; and in the word *ost-eguna* which signifies literally the *terminal day*, that is the day which terminates the quarter of the moon.

Our modern physical science is unacquainted with this principle, yet its existence is very obvious to whoever will fix his attention on the operations of nature ; it is that which determines vegetation, causing the seed placed in the earth amidst hetero-

geneous matter, to preserve its pure essence, and that prevents the intermixture and confusion of the various salts, oils, and rosins which enter into the composition of the stalks, leaves, flowers, and fruits; it is the same which in the animal creation, separates from the alimentary substances, the blood, the bile, and all the other humors of the body.

The Platonicians attributed to this number a variety of excellent qualities; they said amongst other things, that it comprehended within itself the universe and all beings; they seem to have tortured their imaginations to discover in the composition of the number the power which they attributed to it, which only belongs to *term*, of which it is the representation.

The Ægyptians, who had formed their theology out of the primitive physical science, said in their Genesis, that the fifth day their god Nepthis was born; this in physical language means that in the proportion of the number five *term* was created, for Nepthis is no other than this principle, as the Ægyptians themselves have made us understand by material examples.*

SEI.

Next to the creation of *term*, followed that of *form* in the proportion of the number *six*, which is called in basque numeration *sei*, this with the characteristic of an appellative noun is *sei-a*, which signifies the *form*, as in *seia-tu*, to make forms. By means of this principle the particles of matter acquired suitable forms in each work of the creation, of some was composed the earth, of others were the planets, and so on of all inferior existences. Form not only gave to each species the matter which belonged to the purpose for which it was intended, but as a principle to exist as long as the universe, it superintends the reproduction of things so that matter shall not deviate from its primitive form in each species, according to the intention of the Creator.

The Platonicians, always attributing to the proportions of numbers the power which exists only in the principles represented by them, held this in great respect; they observed that squared it terminated in itself, that is in thirty six; for the same reason they attributed equal power to the five; and applying this observation to the operations of nature in vegetation, they attributed to the number six, that the seed in the earth, after passing through various changes, terminated in itself; it was in this course of reasoning, that after observing the harmonies of

*Plut : de Iside, Nepthyn vocant extrema terræ, et iminentia mari.

nature, they adapted the proportions of numbers (which they also called *harmonies*) to them, and persuaded themselves that numbers were the principles, not having been able to penetrate that these were but the representation of created principles which embraced the whole of nature.

CHAPTER VII.

Of Numbers—in Continuation.

SECTION II.—ON THE SOUL OF THE UNIVERSE OR OF THE PRINCIPLES AND LAWS OF ITS MOVEMENT.

THE opinion that the world was animated was derived from the primitive ages, transmitted to the people of the dispersion, it became the subject of laborious research to the philosophers of antiquity, who endeavored by means of such traces as remained of the primitive science, to ascertain the essence of that soul which according to their doctrine was the source of all others in animated nature: the primitive societies certainly established such an opinion, though restricted to much more narrow limits; according to the Euscaldunes the world was animated, and contained within itself all the principles necessary for the animation of other beings; but there is not to be found in any part of their physical doctrine, a single idea that this soul has any other functions than those which direct motion by a merely mechanical instinct, and impress it on the creatures with the instinct appropriate to the organization which each in its species received in its first principle or seed, and with that universal law of conservation which God appointed for the whole creation. Thus we can call this soul sensitive and vegetative, but by no mode rational.

Pythagoras said that the soul was harmony or the result of the proportion of numbers, also that it was number moved or agitated by itself; his doctrine wholly derived from the basque numeration, is as incorrect in this as in the principles explained

in the last chapter, and the opinion of the primitive people which we will now develope, will not only show the source from whence the orientals derived their celebrated system as to the soul of the universe, but will explain the true principles and proportions which constitute the original doctrine.

ZASPI.

The Supreme Author having given to *matter* term and form, willed laws and suitable proportions to *motion* also.

The Pythagoreans and Platonicians when they commenced to build their theory of the soul on what they discovered of it in the primitive philosophy, found motion and matter already formed, but as they had not penetrated the creation of matter, nor comprehended that of motion, (for Pythagoras as we have before seen did not understand the number three in its true import,) so they supposed that matter and the soul of the universe were coeternal with God; and that though these being in a state of confusion, God had given to them order, "*nevertheless (say they) he did not give solidity to matter, nor movement to the soul, nor did he make a body of that which was without a body, or the soul of that which was inanimate.*"

Thus those philosophers reasoned, giving us even in their errors an idea of the original from which they deviated. In fact the motion created in the proportion of the number *three*, was an infinite and unregulated movement; and matter created in the proportion of the number *four* and enveloped in this movement, was also a chaos; both created before the formation of the world and the regulation of movement required new laws to give to them that perfection with which they now act in the grand system of the universe.

In this state of them God created *profundity*, the principle which impels and carries bodies towards the centre of the universe; we call it *z-azpi*, the name of the number seven, in the proportion of which it was created; this word is composed of *z* placed in the composition for fulness in the pronunciation, and *azpi*, which with the characteristic is *azpi-a*, signifying a thing beneath; so the greatest force of this principle is in the lowest point of the universe where is the sun, towards which are drawn all the bodies that are above it.

Thus we see how ancient is this celebrated principle of attraction, which the moderns call centripetal force; but it is to be observed, that the primitive doctrine did not place this attractive power as we do in the *sun*, but in the centre of the

universe, in which the principle of profundity resided before the sun had been created.

Plato said, *that seven was the first number of which the soul of the universe was composed*, this as we see conforms to the basque numeration, in which *profundity* represented by this number, is the first ordination of motion.

The ancients dedicated the number seven to the sun under the name of Apollo*; the generation of *profundity* in the proportion of the number *seven*, and the residence of this principle in the centre of the universe which is occupied by the sun, explains the mystery of that dedication.

ZORCI.

To the creation of *profundity* followed that of *elevation*, in the proportion of the number *eight*; this is a principle acting in opposition to profundity by separating bodies from the centre and elevating them towards the *fixed*;† the number *eight*, as well as the principle which it represents, the basques call *z-or-ci* a word composed of the initial *z*, of *or-or-a* whatever is elevated, and the syllable *ci* which signifies any thing lineal, making together *lineal elevation*.

By this definition in the primitive physical science, it will be seen that the principle of attraction, which we suppose to be a modern discovery, was not only known to the primitive world in *profundity*, but that the principle of *elevation* unknown to modern philosophy, established the ancient system on a basis very different from the doctrine admitted in our schools. The primitive world did not suppose that attraction resided in matter as the moderns pretend, but in two forces diametrically opposed to each other, and which thus sustained bodies in space.

This philosophical opinion of the primitive world as to the universal movement, and the creation of the two opposite principles of *profundity* and *elevation*, became in after ages a theological dogma amongst the predominant doctrines of gentilism, supposing the world to be governed by two gods, one the principal of all good, the other of all evil; which doctrine, says Plutarch, is so ancient that it is impossible to find its origin;

* All the mythologies of the ancients were derived from the East; abundant proofs of this are said to exist in the Hindostani. There is not an ancient absurdity which had not its origin in an absurdity still more ancient, says Condillae.

† The basque philosophy merely mentions the existence of fixed bodies, that is of other systems above ours; but does not form any theory respecting them; their *space* or *eun* did not extend beyond our planetary system.

the materialist Senancour says of it, *that it came to be moral and theological, and that throughout all the nations of the East are found undeniable traces of it, as a doctrine taught by a primitive people long before the existence of those eastern nations.*

Pythagoras, who received this doctrine in the East as explained by numbers, says that Typhon was an evil power and produced by the number *fifty-six*; which is to say that Typhon is the war or opposition of the two principles *profundity* and *elevation* represented by the numbers seven and eight; these multiplied together produce fifty-six, his Typhon; here then is the solution of this Pythagorean mystery. This doctrine not only spread over the East, but was introduced into the West by the first settlers; Marcus Mesala of consular rank, and who was an augur in Rome for fifty-five years, says that the Creator of the universe had united the force which directs heavy bodies to the centre with that which elevates them towards the superior regions, and had surrounded them with the heavens. Cicero says that the numbers seven and eight are full numbers,—and Virgil, “*Ab Iobe principium Musæ Iobis omnia plena.*” The word *Iobe* was a technical word of the primitive physical science, *io-ba*, signifying any thing in which resides *elevation* and *profundity*; it is composed of *io-io-a*, rise or elevation, and the letter *b* which with the characteristic is *ba*, and signifies profundity; this name comprehending the two forces which fill space and operate in all the works of nature, explains the meaning of Virgil. Homer in his *Iliad* places attraction in the principle of elevation residing in *Ioba*, and supposes this imaginary divinity to say that by a chain fixed in the heavens the earth and the seas are drawn upwards. The opinions of men vary with the course of time; in the age of Homer attraction was in elevation, now it is in profundity; in the opinion of the primitive people it was in both principles.

BIDERACI.

There was yet wanting a proper motion of the great soul of the universe, and the planets suspended in space required that proportionate impulse which should carry them round the centre. This motion is that mean force resulting from profundity and elevation, which personified in the oriental cosmogonies, was called Mithras by the Persians, and Isis by the Ægyptians.

To the creation then of elevation, succeeded that of the

principle of *beauty* in the proportion of the number *nine*, called by the Euscaldunes *b-eder-aci*, a word composed of the initial *b* placed in the composition to give fulness to the pronunciation, of *eder* any thing beautiful, and of *aci* the seed or principle.

Notwithstanding the various ideas which are formed of beauty, and which depend on different tastes, there is in it a general principle acknowledged by all men ; we frequently see persons and things which are not handsome according to the general idea of beauty, but which nevertheless excite in us a sentiment of approbation : the principles of nature are perfect, and being harmoniously interwoven with all the existences in this magnificent spectacle of the universe, cannot fail to produce on all of us the same agreeable effect ; the principle which produces in us this pleasing sentiment is motion, and it is therefore that the primitive people called whatever is handsome *ed-er*, a word composed of *ed-ed-a* a sweet thing, and *er* which is a note of movement ; these taken together mean that beauty is a soft movement ; and in effect motion is the expression of life, and the well proportioned animation of the several members is that which constitutes the charm of the whole person : it is thus that Virgil, one of the most nice observers of nature, when he represents Venus under disguise presenting herself to her son Æneus near Carthage, does not say as any ordinary writer would have said, that he knew her by the elegance of her form, or the beauty of her features, but by the grace of her movement,—“*Vera incessu patuit Dea.*”

The motion created in the proportion of the number three was a motion rectilinear and infinite, consequently it could not subsist after the creation of term ; the supreme being then willing an infinite motion, but not in infinite space, ordered circular movement, which controlling the projectile motion, impelled the planets to revolve round the centre of the universe ; thus according to the primitive doctrine was completed and perfectionated the universal movement, producing beauty and harmony in every part of the system.

The Platonicians pronounced the number nine most perfect ; the Chinese considered it as the most fortunate of the numbers ; it was mysteriously celebrated by all the nations of the East ; by the Mexicans it was specially honored ; by the Greeks it was universally respected. All these concurrent testimonies as to the importance of this number, amongst such various nations, must have had a common origin, and this could have been no other than the principle of beauty which the primeval people represented by the number nine.

AMARR.

All the elements essential to the ordination of matter and motion having been created, there was yet wanting a conservative principle, that motion might not lose of its power, or matter become infecund. It does not comport with the sense which we have of the supreme power, to suppose that it would be perpetually occupied in preserving its work from degradation: we are told that God ceased to work; “*Requievit die septimo ab universo o pere quod patrarat.*” We are told in the basque numeration that he created the *mother of fecundity* in the proportion of the number *ten*, which is *am-arr*, a name composed of *am-am-a*, the mother, and the patronymic termination *arr*, or *arr-a*, equivalent to the Castillian *de*, (of,)—we all know that the principle of the mother is fecundity; it is that only which constitutes the mother.

Pythagoras said that ten was *the nature of number*; numbers being the principles of all things, the nature of them must be *fecundity*, which the primitive doctrine supposes to have been created in the number *ten*.

Hitherto no one has been able to explain a mystery observed in the mode of counting which is general amongst nations; when they reach ten, they revert to one, and continue their numeration with ten and one, ten and two, and so onwards; but now seeing that the Euscaldunes supposed ten to be the principle of fecundity, the explanation becomes obvious; they made all the other numbers pass through ten or fecundity, to show that they all received from that principle what was necessary to maintain them in the state of plenitude in which God had created them.

The primitive people have transmitted to us a further proof of the accuracy which they have observed in the representation of ideas by numeration, but on this point they have not been imitated by the nations who have derived their mode of counting from them; they considered that as the number one was the principle of all things, it could not be fecundified, and consequently that it was absurd to pass *bat* through ten; yet it was necessary to place a substitute for it that the harmony of the method might not be disturbed; they supplied its place then with a name, which united to ten carries the idea that in eleven God had fixed the limit for the principle of fecundity, and instead of calling eleven *ama-bat*, they called it *ama-ic-a*.

There is this further curious particularity to be remarked in our basque numeration, it has a number (one) representing the

father, and a number (ten) representing the mother, or *fecundity*; by which we are given to understand that God as father is by means of fecundity continually reproducing the principles of things. The Magi of Persia, as well as several nations of the East, who formed their philosophical systems on the remains of the numeral philosophy of the primitive people, admitted the same doctrine; and Zarates, master of Pythagoras, said that in the generation of all things there was a *number father, and a number exercising the functions of mother*.

Plato said that *God in the creation of things acted as father, not because he had need of the laws of generation, but because by means of another power he infused into matter a prolific principle which gave to it motion*.

OGUEI.

When all the principles created to the number nine inclusive had passed through fecundity, God created *water* in the proportion of the number twenty; according to the basque numeration we call it *o-guei*, a name composed of *o-o-a*, which signifies high, and *guei*, *guei-a*, which signifies matter, that is the matter of heights. The heights is by antonomasia in all languages the heavens, and the matter of the heavens according to the primitive philosophy, and even throughout all antiquity, was supposed to be water.

All the causes having been created, and the principle of fecundity to preserve them in their entirety, there was yet wanting a vehicle which should carry that fecundity through all parts of nature; this having been the opinion of the primitive people, they have taught us by their numeration, that as all the numbers or creations pass through the ten, that by this *fecundity* their elements may be preserved as perfect as they were created, so the number ten or fecundity, passes through number twenty or water; meaning by this, that fecundity being closely connected with that fluid by certain affinities unknown to us, is conducted by it through all parts of the universe: our experience gives extraordinary force to this theory; wherever water flows, upon however sterile land, there forthwith is produced abundance of life and fertility in a variety of animation and vegetation; and this could not be, if there did not exist deposited in water fecundity of the principles which are inert or without exercise in matter.

Thus the primitive people attributed to water the propagation of all things, and as a depository of this universal principle of

fecundity, they determined it to be *the nature*, (by pre-eminence.) From this was derived the opinion of Thales, founder of the Ionic sect, who taught that "*water was the principle of all things.*"

The doctrine of the primitive physical science, is also that which Moses followed in describing the state of the first creation before God had given order to the universe, "*The spirit of God was carried by the waters ;*" according to our philosophy, Moses meant by the "*spirit of God,*" the principle of fecundity in which resides the life of the universe, and which according to our numeral system is deposited in the water.

There may be some amongst the professors of physical science, who calculating the mode of operating of the Supreme Being by our methods, will consider the creation of water before that of its constituent principles to be a very unphilosophical part of the basque system ; but a question raised on this point, would be similar to that of whether the hen was created before the egg or the egg before the hen. Undoubtedly God formed the principles of things to use them in the construction of the universe, but it is not given to our limited capacity to comprehend his mode of operating in all its details ; we must presume that all things were made in an harmonious succession, but who can pretend to know the infinite terms of that succession ? or the various and infinite combinations of matter ? who can distinguish in those combinations results from principles ? for example as to the oxygen and hydrogen gasses of which water is composed ? The primitive doctrine which acquaints us with the creation of water, of course supposes its constituent parts to have been previously formed, and comprehended in matter, not counting them therefore as principles ; for the same reason fire is excluded also from the basque numeration, for it was deemed to be the most subtile portion of matter ; of which opinion was also the great Newton.

Plato said that the parts of which water was composed are icosaedrons ; that is of twenty sides ;* as according to the Euscaldunes water was created in the proportion of the number twenty, and Plato had not penetrated the real sense of that system, so he attributed to the figures formed by this number the generation of water, which in fact was only represented by the number.

* More correctly speaking of twenty equilateral triangles.

EUN.

The principles of all things having been created, there was yet wanting a space for nature to display herself in, a void in which the principles being placed and developed in the proportion assigned by the Creator, should operate in due harmony the purposes for which they were intended. This was the physical doctrine of the Basques, and to the void they assigned the proportion of the number hundred ; they placed in it all the force of profundity and elevation, and embraced by it all the modifications of matter, forming a unity of system, so that in the vast machine of the universe there could not be any one portion independent of the rest.

The basque numeration after it reached twenty as we have before observed, descended to unity, and continued counting by twenties, till it arrived at five of them ; then instead of saying five twenties it said "*an hundred*," the name of which is *E-un*, meaning literally a smooth, agreeable space, and is composed of *e, e-a*, a thing soft or agreeable or smooth, and of *un-un-a*, space.

Every one is aware of the great questions which have been agitated amongst philosophers as to the nature of space, and is acquainted with the theories on this matter which have prevailed in the different schools ; besides those of the ancients, of Democritus, Leucippus, Epicurus and Aristotle, we have those of Descartes and Locke, which are familiar to all literary men, the first pretending that space is matter and assuring us with much gravity *that God has a horror of a vacuum*, and that it cannot exist ; the second maintaining the existence of vacuum : this last having become the prevailing opinion, has given birth to that of an absolute vacuum, which is as little to be comprehended as the other opinion (of a plenum.)

If space, as our learned men suppose, were an absolute vacuum, or nothing, it is evident that there would be wanting a medium of communication or connexion between the parts of nature and the whole ; each planet would be without relation to the others, and the present harmony of the universe could not exist. If the modern doctrine of gravitation of bodies towards each other be admitted, as for example of the moon towards the earth, how can it be allowed that there is vacuum between them ? if there is a vacuum, where is the conductor of the influences which regulate the movements of the heavenly bodies in the perfect harmony which exists ?

All things in nature are connected by the forces or principles

of profundity and elevation and projection which fill and form the nature of space; and in space, according to the basque system, are incorporated all the existences in the universe, as members of the same body. Those principles or forces not only sustain and give impulse to the bodies of the planets, but are the conductors of light to the extreme limits of the solar system, raise the waters into vapors, support the atmosphere, and finally produce a multitude of phœnomena, all explained according to the basque philosophy, by the influence of those forces which occupy space.

Our modern astronomers suppose that space is a complete vacuum; one of the reasons alleged for this opinion is, that the resistance which matter would make to the movement of the planets, would in the course of time arrest that movement. This argument supposes that motion received only a first impulse, in virtue of which the planets revolve because this projectile force does not meet in the void with any resistance by which it is weakened.

The Euscaldunes supposing, as before observed, that fecundity is incorporated with water, it is probable that they also thought that the vapors of this fluid existed in space; though they allowed that the projectile motion was a creation in the proportion of the number nine, they admitted a principle of fecundity always reproducing, supplying waste, and thus preserving motion in the full degree of its first impulse; so that though there be not an absolute vacuum, the force of motion being maintained by reproduction superior to any obstacle opposed to it in space, the planetary movement does not diminish in velocity.

Plato, who in this part of philosophy followed the doctrine of Pythagoras, which had not penetrated the exact representation of the twelfth creation or number hundred in the basque system, said that the dodecadron (or solid of twelve sides) had been employed by God in the creation of the universe; and as the opinion of antiquity supposes this to be globular, he added that the dodecagon contributed to this globular figure; all which means to explain by figures the doctrine, that space in which exists what we call the world, was the twelfth creation.

The Ægyptians also said that the power of the dodecagon (or *plane* of twelve sides) was of *Jove*, attributing to the first of the gods the greatest of the creations; as the two principles of profundity and elevation embrace all space, hence the primitive philosophy said very properly that the twelfth creation, or

space, was of *Jove*, the signification of which we have before given, (under the head *Zorci* eight,) and hence also these two forces comprehending all parts of the universe, as God all its forms, antiquity called him *Jobe*, symbolising him by the name of the most noble of his creations, and with the dodecagon or figure of the universe; and in truth what symbol more suitable to the grandeur of the divinity than the universe; this is the true image of the great *Jova*, a name celebrated and sacred amongst the Hebrews, Ægyptians, Greeks and Romans, but the true signification of which has remained till now unknown.

The number one hundred, in the proportion of which as we have seen was created space, was held in high estimation throughout all antiquity: the history of the gods, which is no other than that of nature, says that *Cybele*, who is the mother of all, had a hundred grand-children, to indicate that in the number hundred was comprehended all nature.

“Qualis Berecynthia mater
Invehitur curru, Phrygiæ turrita per urbes
Læta Deum Partu centum complexa nepotes.”

In the same way *Argos* was fabled to have a hundred eyes, this was a symbol of the starry heavens, which comprehend space, or the number hundred which represents it.

The number twelve was also held in high estimation as the most perfect number, because space was the twelfth and last creation; it was supposed to be specially agreeable to God, since in his wisdom he saw fit to limit to this number the principles which he created for the form and government of the universe: it was for that reason, as is observed by the ecclesiastical writers, that the Patriarchs (sons of *Jacob*) were twelve; the tribes of *Israel* twelve; the Apostles twelve; the fountains of *Elihu* twelve; the stones in the pectoral of *Aaron* twelve; the columns erected by *Joshua* twelve; those who were sent out by *Moses* to explore the land of promise twelve; the brazen oxen in the temple of *Jerusalem* twelve; the subdivisions of the kingdom of *Solomon* twelve; the stones with which *Elias* made an altar twelve; and finally, not to prolong this enumeration, the signs of the zodiac twelve; and the months of the year twelve.

MILLA.

Though with the twelfth terminated the creation of all the principles necessary for the formation of the universe,—still

number progressed, that is to say the principles created continued to extend themselves into the infinity of space. We learn from the primitive numeration, what Empedocles and Metrodorus (who derived it from the East,) taught in their schools,—that what we call the world is but a small portion of the universe.

The Basques as soon as they reached the number hundred in their numeral system returned back to unit, and went on thus counting hundreds till they reached nine hundred, and ninety-nine units; there they terminated the extension of number, that is of all the principles of nature, and therefore they placed for the number thousand, the word *m-illa*, that is to say whatever is *dead, absolute privation*, and whatever quality is analogous to death in the physical order; this word is composed of the initial *m*, and of the participle *illa*, from the verb *ill* to die; the primitive societies meant by this name to indicate the term of nature and the universe, the absolute privation of all things, the "*exterior darkness*" of the scripture.*

Aristotle, who acquired some notions of the primitive opinions, differing from all other philosophers of antiquity taught that the principles of things were *perpetual motion, matter, and privation*; but it is evident that privation cannot be a principle of any thing, and therefore the Basques, though they place in the catalogue of creations the number thousand which represents it, (and from thence was the mistake of Aristotle) give to us in its very definition the true idea which we ought to have of this number, showing that it is not a creature or a principle, but the term of nature.

I have now explained the basque numeration according to my best comprehension of it; the examination of this portion of the language presents to our admiration, not only the opinions of that epoch in which the Euscaran language had its origin, but the consummate wisdom and ingenuity by which a system was so formed, as to comprehend within thirteen numbers all the most sublime principles of natural philosophy, and so arranged this numeration, as to present at one view the order and connexion of these principles, and of all the harmonies of nature.

All the academic learning of our time were not equal to the formation of such a system; none of our philosophers could

* "*Exterior darkness*," i. e. beyond our system. St. Matthew, ch. 22, v 13.

explain a science like this at once so extensive and so delicate, within such narrow and precise limits.

The Euscaldunes instead of giving in mysterious numeration a progression of number quite insignificant, as is done conventionally in all the languages with which we are acquainted, sought it in its origin, and denoted in its denominations, those first causes in which it had its existence ; it is thus that they have presented to us in a numeral table, the most extraordinary phenomenon in language which the human genius ever devised.

Instead of the unmeaning names, one, two, three, &c. now used by all nations, here is the admirable mode of the Euscaldunes.

<i>Common Numbers.</i>	<i>Basque Denominations.</i>	<i>Translation.</i>
One,	Bat,	The father, or generator.
Two,	Bi,	The line, or longitude.
Three,	Iru,	The lineal motion.
Four,	Lau,	The matter.
Five,	Bost,	The term.
Six,	Sei,	The form.
Seven,	Zasp,	The profundity.
Eight,	Zorzi,	The elevation.
Nine,	Bederazi.	The principle of beauty.
Ten,	Amarr,	The mother, or fecundity.
Hundred,	Eun,	The space.
Thousand.	Milla,	The death or privation.

This most extraordinary monument preserved in the imperishable archives of the Euscaran language, cannot fail to engage the attention of the learned. Yet I do not present it to the public with the intention of discussing the truth of its principles, for this is not in the plan of my work ; nor is it my present purpose to decide on its merits whatever these may be. I leave it to the critics to estimate a document in which we find the chief opinions and principles of the theology and philosophy of the ancient eastern nations.

The explanation which I have given of this numeration, and the comparison of it with the doctrines of Pythagoras and Plato founded on the numeral philosophy brought to Greece from the East, leaves not any doubt as to their common origin ; nor as to the source from whence were derived the various opinions with respect to the excellent properties of certain numbers, which have prevailed amongst the nations of the dispersion, as

the Hindoos, Chinese, Ægyptians, Mexicans, &c.—which nations widely separated, and having had no intercommunication since the dispersion, must be supposed to have received these and other traditions which they have in common, from a people to whom they all owe their origin.

The several tracts published by myself, and by my most excellent and learned friend Astarloa, have as I believe thoroughly convinced every unprejudiced mind that the Euscaran or Basque language was the primitive idiom brought to Spain by its first settlers; nor does there remain the least doubt but that the Grecian alphabet was wholly taken from that primitive idiom; I trust that the conclusive arguments with which I have supported that opinion are irrefragable, and will remain a perpetual proof that the Greeks owed the first elements of their civilization to the Euscaldunes, and not to the Phœnecians as has been hitherto erroneously supposed. It is more especially evident, that the Euscaran language, and of consequence its numeration, existed before the birth of Pythagoras and Plato, consequently that the numeral philosophy which they taught was not their own; though the profound silence with regard to its origin, which as true Greeks they did not fail to observe, has procured for them in the general opinion the merit of inventors. Whatever computation be admitted as to the time when Spain was originally peopled, it is perfectly evident also that the Euscaran language and its numeration existed many centuries anterior to the Phœnecian epoch; this computation brings us to a period approximating that of the deluge; this being so, and as there was but one language common to all the families at the time of their dispersion, it is not possible to suppose that those of them who came to Spain, quitting that idiom formed a new one during all the hardships and labors of their migration; much less is it to be conceived, that during those years of toils and sufferings, they acquired all the profound knowledge which is comprised in the Euscaran language: if it be true that some of the families of the dispersion did gradually form new idioms, we have already explained the means by which this was effected; means wholly different certainly from those which must be supposed to belong to a nation who could form such a language as the Euscaran; such a people must be supposed not only to have been preserved from that decline into a state of ignorance and semi-barbarism which necessarily results from a long period of painful and laborious existence, but on the contrary to have made a wonderful progress in the most profound science of nature; for the Euscaran language is a universal encyclopædia.

We know how many ages it took to restore to civilization the other nations which were buried in ignorance ; but whatever be the degree of ignorance or of civilization in which we are disposed to consider the basque people as having been at the time of their arrival in Spain, it is certain that they brought with them the Euscaran language in which existed the principles of all the sciences cultivated by that great nation.

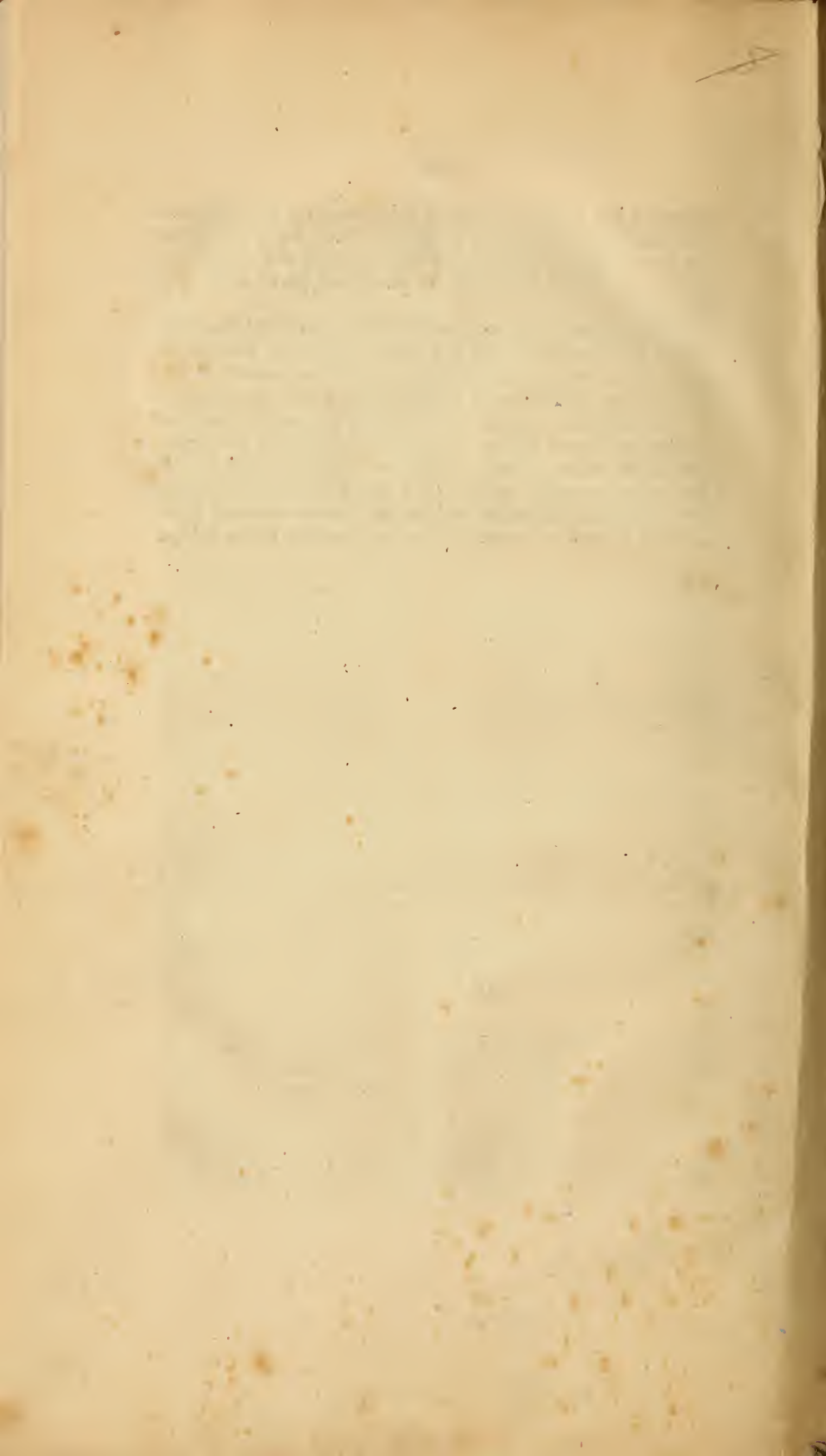
The supposition then not being admissible that during their migration the basque people forgot their own language, acquired immense knowledge, formed a new language in which to deposit it, and brought that language into general use ; it follows that the language which they brought to Spain must have been the same which they had in Armenia, and consequently the same that was spoken before the deluge ; but apart from all suppositions, we find conclusive evidence of the fact in the numeration which we have examined.

It being certain that vestiges of the numeral philosophy are found scattered through various nations who have not had any intercommunication since their separation, we must seek for a common origin of those opinions in a people and a language anterior to the separation ; whatever be that language, the system of nature in question must necessarily have been explained in its numeration, because in that only could be contained a system wholly founded upon its proportions ; and because the very ideas of numbers which all these different nations offer to us, prove that the principles from which they have derived them are founded on the excellences of numeration. Now then arises the question, is there a language which presents to us a numeration regulated to the order and proportion in which are placed first causes in the plan of nature, and which at the same time manifests the succession, number, and power of her creations ? Not one certainly the basque excepted ; this is the only idiom which offers to our examination that sublime plan, and which proves by the method and order of its numeration, that it was the origin of natural philosophy.

We have seen how erroneous and limited were the ideas of the Orientals transmitted to us by Pythagoras, who had learnt all that was known upon this subject in Ægypt and Persia ; and whilst we observe that every part of the Euscaran philosophy proves its originality, we distinctly see how the Eastern nations deviated into error by a misconception of the true meaning of its numeration : all the form and polish which these ideas received from the great intellectual powers of Pythagoras and

Plato in the systems imagined by them, have not sufficed to establish their theories, nor to prevent their being considered by the moderns as chimerical abstractions full of confusion and obscurity, and wholly foreign to the principles of sound philosophy.

To the learned then may confidently be submitted the question to what people belongs the honor of having invented the numeral system?—if they decide, as is to be presumed they will, in favor of the basque people and language, then I leave it to them to fix the epoch in which that great nation cultivated and formed into a system the principles of natural philosophy, and of the other sciences which constitute the basis of their language; an epoch, which as it is not possible to fix between the time of the dispersion and that of the population of Spain, must of necessity be sought for in ages anterior to the deluge.



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